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HANDBOOK

FOR YOUTH WORKERS WORKING IN THE FIELD OF DIGITAL SAFETY



AKADEMIE
für Politische Bildung
und demokratiefördernde Maßnahmen

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TITLE

"Handbook for youth workers working in the field of digital safety"

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

Title of the project: "Prevention of youth risky viral trends", Erasmus+

Duration: 36 months (From 01.11.2022 till 31.10.2025)

Priorities and Topics: Addressing digital transformation through development of digital readiness, resilience, and capacity; Increasing quality, innovation and recognition of youth work; Promoting active citizenship, young people's sense of initiative and youth entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship.

The project aims include:

- Improving the skills, knowledge and competences of young people and of those working with them to prevent the risks associated with the use of social networks (including cyberbullying, tracking dangerous risk trends, etc.)
- Prevention and protection from Internet addiction, dangerous encounters with strangers, theft of personal and financial data, lack of face-to-face contact and interpersonal skills, low media literacy, social isolation, reduced mental well-being etc.;
- Improving the quality of youth work and raising awareness about the risks in social networks.

Products of the project:

- Research of current risks, associated with social networks;
- Study of modern methods of preventing risks in social networks;
- Innovative social media risk prevention methodology (including risks such as cyberbullying, low media literacy, belief of fake news and misinformation and tracking dangerous viral trends that can take lives and cause injuries);
- Handbook for youth workers working in the field of digital safety.

Target groups of the project: Youth workers, youth leaders, youth, social workers, and other specialists working directly with young people.

Pilot application and multiplication: it will be organized during trainings for youth workers and youth. The sharing and multiplication of the products – during Dissemination events.

Leading organization: "Follow Me" Association, Dobrich, Bulgaria - a non-governmental organization, registered in 2018. It provides professional and methodical support in various spheres of public life - youth; ecology and

environment; transportation; administrative capacity, human resources (HR), regional development, competitiveness, territorial and international cooperation, education, youth activities, health care, social activities, psychology, etc. The association has participated in various charitable initiatives, environmental and youth causes, conducting trainings on socially significant topics, organized conferences and seminars, studies and analyses, develops projects, programs, strategies and plans, provides consultations and expertise, research and innovation. The total number of members of the Association and the informal group is 63. Partners are municipalities, kindergartens and schools, administrations and business associations in Bulgaria and abroad.

Project partners: Academy for political education and measures to promote democracy, Austria; “Mother Teresa” University in Skopje, North Macedonia; Urban forum association, Poland.

- **Academy for political education and measures to promote democracy, Austria** (Akademie für politische Bildung und demokratiefördernde Maßnahmen, Austria) - a non-profit association dealing with political education, equal opportunities for unemployed and employed people of all ages, migrants, women in the labor market, innovative, digital trainings, digitization, entrepreneurship education, environmental protection and sustainability. It partners with a variety of schools, companies and public institutions, supporting the personal and academic development of children, adults, senior citizens and disadvantaged people. Every year the team develops and implements 10-15 innovative educational projects in which they participate as leading organization or partners, reaching over 10,000 participants.
- **“Mother Teresa” University in Skopje, North Macedonia** (Универзитет Мајка Тереза, Скопје, Северна Македонија) was founded in 2015. Its mission is to create academic opportunities for students where they can develop as individuals and as professionals by combining competence of critical and analytical thought and nurturing entrepreneurial spirit. “Mother Teresa” University in Skopje offers education in natural and social sciences through its five faculties: Faculty of Social Sciences; Faculty of Informatics; Faculty of Technological Sciences; Faculty of Technical Sciences and Faculty of Architecture. The University has been awarded the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education for the Erasmus+ program 2014-2020 for supporting mobility opportunities for learners and staff in educational, training and youth institutions and organizations. It

collaborates with institutions in higher education, governmental and non-governmental agencies, academics in Macedonia and abroad.

- **Urban forum association, Poland** - a non-governmental organization created to support civic initiatives, social innovation, education and implementation of green initiatives. Urban Forum was created by people with international experience and a local ambition to make immediate environment better. The aim is to actively face the challenges of the future - from the digitization of processes and climate change, through the energy and health related activities of citizens, to ecosystem actions and community building. The association designs and implements new solutions, technologies, civic initiatives and models for local community participation in areas of key importance for the modern world of challenges based on European experience. In 2021, the association has 8 experts.

I. INTRODUCTION

Europe is concerned about young people's online and offline lives. There are two broad perspectives to the problem – digital safety from one side and digital well-being from the other. As digital technology evolves, it is essential to adapt, to learn and to change the way young people use it. This means that the resources for young people in Europe must be designed to reflect on harmful and illegal online content and deliver positive content by teaching children and young people on how to fully benefit from digital technologies and maintain their well-being¹.

Digital safety refers to the practices, habits and tools, designed to protect and educate children and adolescents on the safe and responsible use of digital technologies, particularly social media platforms. This includes understanding privacy settings to control who can see their information, learning about the persistence of online actions and the concept of a 'digital footprint', being aware of the risks of sharing personal data and knowing how to respond to threats such as cyberbullying, online predators or inappropriate content. In addition, digital safety for young users also includes fostering a healthy relationship with technology, avoiding excessive use that can lead to internet addiction. It is essentially about providing them with the knowledge and skills to navigate their digital lives safely, responsibly and respectfully. Digital safety is extremely important for young users for several reasons:

- **Cyberbullying protection:** With the anonymity of the internet, cyberbullying has become a serious problem. It can have serious psychological consequences for young people, leading to anxiety, depression and even self-harm. Digital safety measures can help protect children from such harmful interactions.
- **Privacy issues:** young consumers often do not fully understand the implications of sharing personal information online. Social media platforms can collect vast amounts of data that can be used in ways that violate their privacy. Educating young people about digital safety can help them understand how to protect their personal information.
- **Preventing online predation:** the Internet, and social media in particular, can unfortunately be a breeding ground for predators. These individuals may pose as peers to take advantage of young users. Digital safety training can help young people recognize and avoid potentially dangerous situations.
- **Exposure to inappropriate content:** social networks can expose young people to inappropriate or harmful content. This can be explicit content,

violent material or hate speech. Good digital safety habits, such as using content filters and understanding how to report content, can reduce this risk.

- **Internet addiction:** young people can become overly dependent on social networks, leading to internet addiction. This can affect their social skills, academic performance and overall well-being. Understanding the need for digital wellbeing as part of digital safety can help reduce this risk.
- **Protecting reputations:** young people may not understand that their actions online can have long-term consequences. For example, universities and employers often review social media profiles. Digital safety involves learning the potential consequences of online behavior and how to maintain a positive digital footprint.

Technology and interactive media have provoked both celebration and fears. We have the ability to connect across borders and at all times, increasing the breadth and depth of our communities. But this level of connectivity can bring with it risks of social, emotional, and even physical harm. As we move into future versions of the internet – Including artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and “metaverse” applications – we have an opportunity to learn from mistakes and successes in the past, to lay a strong foundation for a healthier, more positive and productive digital world².

Over the last decade, the number of people online and the frequency with which they log on has dramatically increased. From 2013 to 2022, the number of people who were online increased from 2.7 billion (39% of the world population) to 5.3 billion (66%)³. Further, what it means to be “online” has substantially changed, expanding beyond websites, search engines, and small social networks to broad, dynamic social media platforms, video streaming sites, and immersive, interactive environments where people socialize, explore, play, and learn together.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly a full third (31%) of children in the United States had a personal smartphone by the age of 8; that percentage increased to 93% by the age of 18⁴. Studies indicate that nearly half (49.5%) of teens and young adults use smartphones for five hours or more during weekdays and spend a majority of their time on video and communication apps^{5,6}. Young people have more access to the world now than ever before.

This level of connectivity can be a positive — the internet offers opportunities for connection across geographic and political boundaries, identity formation within safe spaces, and resources for learning new information and skills. Adolescents report feeling more connected to their friends, better supported

through difficult experiences, and more able to express themselves⁷. Marginalized youth, particularly LGBTQ+ teens (an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and more⁸), are able to find community online, in numbers greater than their non-LGBTQ+ peers; LGBTQ+ teens were almost 20 times more likely to identify their online communities as “essential”⁹. Online communities offer platforms for identity and relationship exploration that many marginalized teens are unable to find offline.

Constant connectivity can also present a notable risk, however, particularly in how users treat one another online. Nearly half (46%) of teens in the U.S. say they have been cyberbullied or harassed online¹⁰. Cyberbullying victimization has been linked to dramatic increases in the likelihood of suicidality¹¹ and other negative mental health outcomes for adolescents¹². Reports of cyberbullying, online harassment, and other forms of victimization have been increasing over time and occur earlier as more young children gain access to online spaces¹³.

In 2023, 51% of teens reported that they had experienced some form of harassment in the past 12 months, up from 36% in 2022, with 32% reporting severe harassment; 22% cited race or ethnicity and 20% cited gender as reasons for why they had been harassed online¹⁴. A full fifth (22%) of LGBTQ+ teens and young adults have reported witnessing potentially distressing content, including racist, sexist, or anti-LGBTQ+ speech online¹⁵.

Some studies indicate that increased time spent online – and particularly engaging in online communities and with social media apps – may be associated with negative mental health outcomes and decreased feelings of self-worth for young people^{16,17}. For marginalized communities, negative experiences and a lack of online civility from other users are particularly prominent and can drive serious mental health outcomes^{18,19}. While it is important to note that, in many cases, these effects are small, even the slightest risk of negative experiences online warrants re-evaluating how these online spaces may perpetuate uncivil interactions and what can be done to reduce potential harms.

As key indicators of young people’s mental health continue to decline²⁰ and some young people continue to cite negative online experiences as one key driver of their negative outcomes^{21,22}, it is evident that it is imperative for technology leaders and policymakers to focus efforts on supporting more civil digital spaces.

Studies have already discussed the role and impact of digital technologies on our individual and social lives, looking at several aspects of digital life. These studies explicate how technologies have influenced the four critical social domains such

as health and healthcare, education and employment, governance and social development, and media and entertainment (Burr et al., 2020)²³. As a result, a new term has evolved in the recent years, and it is called digital wellbeing.

Digital wellbeing is the ability to understand the positive and negative impact of engaging with digital technology and maintain a healthy relationship with technology in a balanced way²⁴.

Many assessment frameworks, policy documents, curricula, and academic publications explore various approaches towards understanding digital wellbeing. Digital wellbeing is not just about skills, empowerment, subjective and social wellness, and physiological state. Digital wellbeing as an umbrella term that encompasses various indicators that could be defined as²⁵:

- Crafting and maintaining a healthy relationship with technology that can be used in a balanced and civic way;
- Identifying and understanding the positive and negative impacts of engaging with digital activities;
- Being aware of ways to manage and control factors that contribute to digital wellbeing.

Digital Wellbeing										
		Digital Safety & Security	Digital Rights & Responsibilities	Digital Communication	Digital Emotional Intelligence	Digital Creativity	Digital Health & Self-Care	Digital Consumerism	Digital Employment & Entrepreneurship	Digital Activism/Civic Participation
Digital Citizenship	Digital Skills	Safe and Secure Use	Rights and Responsibilities Online	Communicative Literacy	Emotional Literacy	Creative Literacy and Expression	e-Health Literacy	Consumer Awareness and Literacy	Productivity Skills	Digital Political Literacy
	Digital Identity	Secure Identity Management	Responsible Netizen Identity	Participation and Identity Formation	Empathy	Content Creation and Evaluation	Self-care and Reputation	Autonomy and Data Management	Career Identity	Digital Political Identity
	Digital Empowerment & Agency	Safe Online Participation	Digital Footprint Management	Collaboration and Communication	Solitary and Relationship Management	Digital Creativity and Innovation	Healthcare and Social Wellbeing	Consumer Rights and Competencies	Innovation and Entrepreneurship	Digital Political Activism

Figure 1. Framework on digital wellbeing²⁶

The nine dimensions of digital wellbeing, which are placed horizontally, include²⁷:

1. **Digital safety and security:** The ability to critically identify, understand, and manage different levels and kinds of digital threats while being able

one's identity, data, and wellbeing online within a safe digital environment.

2. **Digital rights and responsibilities:** The ability to be accountable online, to uphold human and legal rights using technology, and critically dealing with personal information.
3. **Digital communication:** The ability to establish clear and effective modes of communication that would allow expression and collaboration through technologies to achieve intended goals.
4. **Digital emotional intelligence:** The ability to critically recognise, evaluate, and express one's emotions as well as demonstrate empathy towards other people in digital interactions and environment.
5. **Digital creativity:** The ability to create and reimagine knowledge and technologies into reality through ICT tools and innovations.
6. **Digital health and self-care:** The ability to be aware of one's physical and psychological wellbeing and maintain a healthy relationship when using technology.
7. **Digital consumerism:** The ability to fair, informed, and equitable choice in the online market while being protected with consumer rights.
8. **Digital employment and entrepreneurship:** The ability to identify and use opportunities to acquire competencies to improve professional life and contribute to the global economy.
9. **Digital activism/civic participation:** The ability to spur and participate in cause-oriented groups and initiatives that affect meaningful changes in digital and physical environments; the ability to be protected against dis/misinformation while being informed with relevant and validated data.

Digital Citizenship is defined as the ability to articulate proactively and responsibly in the digital environment while using technology fairly and ethically. Vertically placed in the framework, the three key components of digital citizenship include:

1. **Digital skills:** The ability to identify, understand, and use digital tools and technologies in everyday settings confidently, critically, and consciously.
2. **Digital identity:** The ability to establish a holistic and differentiated online and offline identity.

3. **Digital empowerment and agency:** The ability to pursue and decide on personal goals and decisions; the ability to proactively engage with society and sustain meaningful online interactions through digital tools and technologies.

The interrelations between the horizontal and vertical aspects of digital wellbeing and digital citizenship respectively led to the identification of 27 competencies:

1. **Safe and secure use:** Ability to use digital tools efficiently to manage cyber-risks and cyber threats, protecting digital content and digital infrastructures.
2. **Rights and responsibilities online:** Ability to observe and practice various rights and responsibilities of digital life.
3. **Communicative literacy:** Communicate online effectively and efficiently through various forms of multimedia.
4. **Emotional literacy:** Use and comprehend digital emotional jargons and cues (e.g., emoticons, like, share, etc.); identify emotional situations and contexts online.
5. **Creative literacy and expression:** Use, recognize, and understand digital and creative tools and social media platforms.
6. **e-health literacy:** Ability to access information and understand the consequences of digital consumption to ensure better physical and mental health.
7. **Consumer awareness and literacy:** Use and browse advertisements, goods, information, and services online; learn and understand novel digital commercial practices.
8. **Productivity skills:** Ability to learn and develop economic competencies to accomplish goals in professional life.
9. **Digital political literacy:** Ability to politically recognize, use, and evaluate digital platforms, tools, and content.
10. **Secure identity management:** Build and maintain a digital identity through safe, responsible, and ethical behavior online.
11. **Responsible netizen identity:** Build a digital persona that upholds human rights online.
12. **Participation and Identity formation:** Responsibly articulate and express and manage thoughts and identities; positively impacting and establishing self-image and organization's reputation online.

- 13. Empathy:** Become emotionally and ethically aware and sensitive of oneself and others; emotionally supportive and available for other people's needs and concerns.
- 14. Content creation and evaluation:** Create and develop digital content by executing plans to creative outputs; engage and decide on problems through creative solutions; express identity through creative means.
- 15. Self-care and reputation:** Use digital technologies offline and online effectively and autonomously to set examples for balanced use of technology.
- 16. Autonomy and data management:** Transact and manage identity and preference data in digital markets; assess and achieve subjective wellbeing.
- 17. Career identity:** Develop an identity through exploring and contributing to the digital economy.
- 18. Digital political identity:** Develop a sense of political identity through exploring and contributing to social movements online.
- 19. Safe online participation:** Work towards a safe and secure a common digital environment by developing protocols and promoting best practices.
- 20. Digital footprint management:** Ability to take rightful and responsible decision to manage digital footprints to shape evolving digital culture.
- 21. Collaboration and communication:** Collaborate with people of different cultural backgrounds and from distant places; engage with public figures and institutions; taking part in online social movements that positively impact communities.
- 22. Solitary and relationship management:** Develop genuine relationships as well as bridge differences online that create a sense of alterity and belongingness.
- 23. Digital creativity and innovation:** Reimagine and rethinking existing digital tools and content; produce creative solutions and ideas that positively impact communities as well as spur meaningful experience through digital means.
- 24. Healthcare and social wellbeing:** Assert organizational and community practices that promote and ensure healthy use of digital tools and online platforms for improving individual and social wellbeing.
- 25. Consumer rights and competencies:** Assert consumer rights and responsibilities in the digital marketplace; introduce innovative business

practices that foster collaboration and maintain genuine customer-seller relations.

26. Innovation and entrepreneurship: Being part of a digital ecosystem to innovate and transform the global economy to build new opportunities for sustainable employment and entrepreneurship.

27. Digital political activism: Engage in politically motivated activities through online consumption, participation, fundraising, and hacking.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development has constructed a framework to help shape what young people learn for 2030. Its initial focus is school curricula. Four propositions are integral to the 2030 Framework:

- The evolution of the traditional disciplinary curriculum should be rapidly accelerated to create knowledge and understanding for the 21st century;
- The skills, attitudes and values that shape human behavior should be rethought, to counter the discriminatory behaviors picked up at school and in the family;
- An essential element of modern learning is the ability to reflect on the way one learns best;
- Each learner should strive to achieve a small set of key competences, such as the competence to act autonomously. A competence is the ability to mobilize knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, alongside a reflective approach to the processes of learning, in order to engage with and act in the world. Global competence is being constructed on exactly this model.

Knowledge, skills, attitudes and values are seen as interconnected and interacting to produce competencies in action²⁸:



Figure 2. OECD Education 2030 Framework

Students who are best prepared for the future are change agents. They can have a positive impact on their surroundings, influence the future, understand others' intentions, actions and feelings, and anticipate the short and long-term consequences of what they do. The concept of competency implies more than just the acquisition of knowledge and skills; it involves the mobilization of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to meet complex demands. Students will need to apply their knowledge in unknown and evolving circumstances. For this, they will need a broad range of skills, including cognitive and meta-cognitive skills (e.g. critical thinking, creative thinking, learning to learn and self-regulation); social and emotional skills (e.g. empathy, self-efficacy and collaboration); and practical and physical skills (e.g. using new information and communication technology devices). If students are to play an active part in all dimensions of life, they will need to navigate through uncertainty, across a wide variety of contexts: in time (past, present, future), in social space (family, community, region, nation and world) and in digital space²⁹.

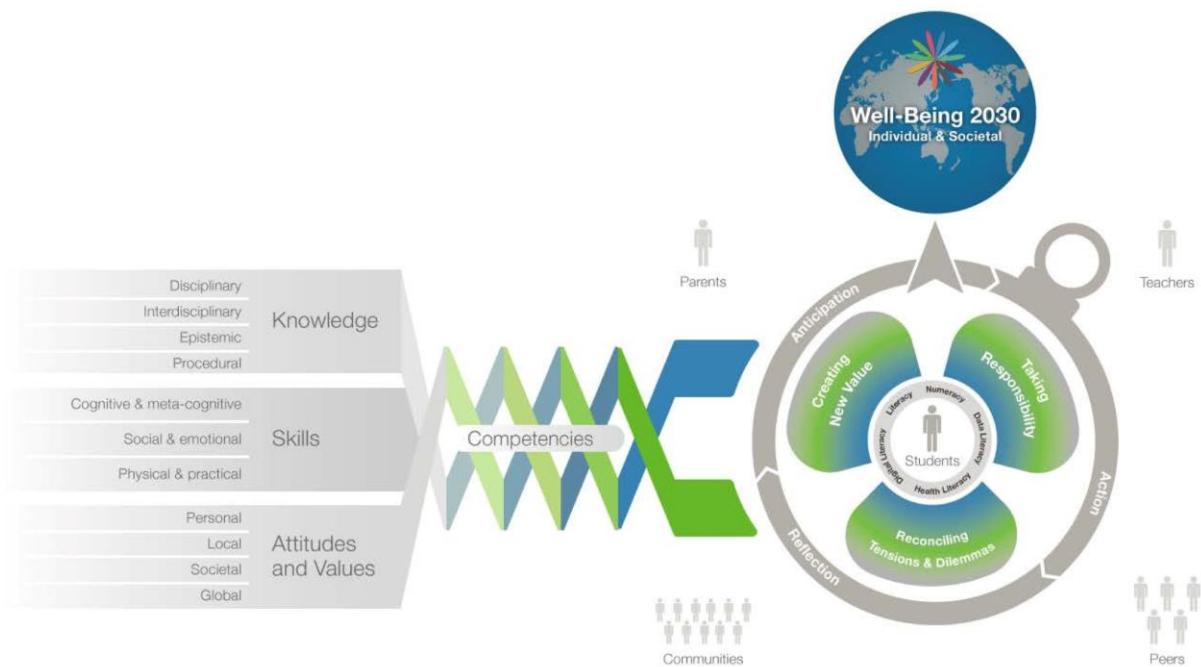


Figure 3. The OECD Global competence model, v.14³⁰

Traditionally, education about digital safety has focused on protecting individuals from online dangers and risks, but nowadays discussions also focus on how students might be encouraged to proactively develop a positive presence or influence online, as seen notably in the Singaporean Ministry of Education's Cyber Wellness principles and the Australian eSafety Commissioner's Respect principles³¹.

In today's rapidly evolving digital world, ensuring the safety and well-being of young people has become a paramount concern of society. The increasing prevalence of social networking and technology has brought with it a range of challenges and risks that young people face, such as cyberbullying, online sexual contact, identity theft and exposure to harmful content. Recognizing the urgent need for comprehensive guidance and support, **a handbook for youth workers working in digital safety and more specifically in social media safety and well-being of young people** has been developed to address these issues.

II. ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed to serve as a **comprehensive and practical guide that empowers youth workers to protect the well-being of young people in the digital age**. By promoting digital literacy, encouraging responsible online behavior and addressing the unique challenges facing young people in social media today, the handbook contributes to creating a safer and more inclusive digital environment for all, including:

- **Knowledge and skills development:** the handbook aims to improve digital intelligence to both – educators (youth workers, teachers, etc.) and students (children and young people) by providing knowledge and practical skills to understand and address issues, related to digital media. Information is provided in different topics of digital safety, and it offers practical strategies, tools and resources to help youth workers deal effectively with these issues;
- **Training Resources:** this handbook can serve as a valuable resource of training and education programs, focused on digital intelligence and safety. It can be used to facilitate workshops, seminars or training sessions, providing a comprehensive framework for educators, allowing them to acquire necessary skills and knowledge to pass on children and young people;
- **Best practices and guidelines:** the handbook is based on best practices worldwide and establishes guidelines for youth workers, working in the field of digital safety. It outlines methodological aspects of education, steps of the training process, ethical considerations and professional boundaries for responsible use of technology when engaging with young people. The guide helps to ensure that youth workers maintain high standards in practice, comply with legal and ethical obligations and promote a positive online experience for young people.

In conclusion, the guide serves as a roadmap for navigating the complex landscape of social networking, empowering users to engage meaningfully, safely, and effectively. It serves as a guide in formulating effective strategies and implementing safe practices when using social networks for educational purposes. In this relation, it may be concluded that the handbook is not just important - it is essential in our increasingly interconnected digital world.

PURPOSE

The general purpose of this handbook is to fill the gaps in skills, knowledge and understanding of young people in partner countries and to help them make sense of their online experiences, their perceptions, actions and options to address social media risks and harms.

The specific purpose of the handbook is to offer to youth workers, teachers and other educators proactive training programs, methods and actions for practical work to prevent and minimize possible risks and harms, related to social media that children and young people in partner countries face on a daily basis.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Social networks are powerful platforms for communicating, connecting, learning and creating. However, they are also associated with potential risks, such as breach of privacy, cyberbullying, misinformation and exposure to inappropriate content. This comprehensive handbook provides users with the tools and knowledge to tackle these challenges and maximize the benefits of social networks. More specifically, the handbook fulfils a number of essential functions:

- It promotes a common understanding of online risks, thereby standardizing safe and responsible behavior. It equips users to protect their privacy, respect the digital rights of others and make informed decisions about what to share and with whom to interact;
- It empowers users, both teachers and students, equipping them with the knowledge they need to navigate the digital world confidently and safely by enhancing digital literacy, promoting ethical online behavior and encouraging critical thinking;
- It plays an important role in nurturing a generation of responsible digital citizens who are aware of their rights, responsibilities and the ethical implications of their actions online;
- It also empowers users to not only consume digital content, but to participate in the digital world in a thoughtful, respectful and responsible way;
- Ultimately, it helps users maintain a healthy balance between their online and offline lives, protecting their mental, physical and emotional wellbeing in an age where digital overload is a real problem.

FOUNDATION

This handbook is based on several documents, products of this project:

- A. Research on current risks among young people as users of social networks³², conducted in Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Poland and Austria;
- B. Research on methods of prevention among young people as users of social networks³³, conducted in Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Poland and Austria;
- C. Methodology for prevention of risks in social networks for young people³⁴ with current knowledge about digital well-being and online safety of young people.

The training programs for young people, included in the handbook include competences and skills for safe use of social media, based on a combination of the following methods:

- **desk research in the field of social media**, including a review of best practices & innovations, recent research results, literature review, data collection, analysis of social media platforms, identifying trends and patterns;
- **questionnaire-based approach**, including questionnaire design, sampling, distribution, data collection and data analysis of the data from a survey including 392 young people from all project partner countries;
- **integration of all the collected data and information**, including Induction, classification, specialization, generalization, triangulation and others, resulting in providing specific conclusions and recommendations on the topic.

STRUCTURE

The handbook consists of **specific training programs for young people**, helping them to overcome the harmful influence of social media. The programs are:

- Program 1:** Social media risks
- Program 2:** Digital media literacy
- Program 3:** Critical thinking
- Program 4:** Fake news and disinformation
- Program 5:** Personal data protection
- Program 6:** Safe & positive communication
- Program 7:** Online harassment

- Program 8:** Digital reputation & digital image
- Program 9:** Mental health and well-being online
- Program 10:** Positive online engagement
- Program 11:** Social exclusion and isolation
- Program 12:** Dangerous viral trends
- Program 13:** Influencers
- Program 14:** Digital citizenship & digital responsibility

Each program includes:

- A. Theoretical explanation of the possible risk or harm, associated to social media,** their possible impact on children and young people and suitable methods for prevention.
- B. Practical training program for the implementation of prevention & protection methods** for young people, using social media – this part includes different educational methods and actions like practical exercises, games, case studies, role plays, group discussions and other pedagogical and psychological tools for acquiring specific skills among children and teens that will make them safer online.

TARGET GROUPS

The target group of the training process, based on the handbook and methodology include:

- **Young people 14-29 years old** - the handbook and its training programs contains practical tools that can be used in non-formal youth training. They are aimed at a target group of young people 14-29 years old. Here should be noted that some of the actions and exercises are also suitable for younger students (10 years old), which expands the scope of application;
- **Youth workers, working with young people** - the youth worker as a profession is a relatively new concept. Most often these are young people, volunteers or professionals with experience in running events, campaigns and activities with other young people. A commonly used method of teaching in the field of youth is "peer to peer teaching";
- **Teachers, educators, counselors and other pedagogical specialists** working in the field of informal learning and youth work - professionals working with young people and teachers in schools and universities are also a target group where motivation is usually the leading criterion as they are already qualified and experienced.

TERMINOLOGICAL CLARIFICATION

According to Cambridge dictionary³⁵ the term “social networks” and “social media” are defined with the same meaning as: “website and computer program that allow people to communicate and share information on the internet, using a computer, mobile phone or another electronic device”. Therefore, in this document both terms would be used interchangeably to represent all accessible public digital media platforms that allow young people to communicate and share information.

III. HOW TO APPLY THE HANDBOOK?

This handbook requires a specific approach for its best implementation and effectiveness for young people. Since the educators and students are diverse there are several reasonable steps for using the handbook:

STEP 1:

Familiarize yourself with the „Methodology for prevention of risks in social networks for young people”³⁶, developed in this project – study the possible risks and harms, associated with social media and their effects on young people and long-lasting consequences. Pay attention to the prevention and protection recommendations and popular methods. For further reading we recommend two additional supplementary project products: “Research on current risks among young people as users of social networks”³⁷ and “Research on methods of prevention among young people as users of social networks”³⁸.

STEP 2:

Analyze your student’s needs, experiences and capacity for learning. According to Graves³⁹ in every course we teach, we can assume that ‘there is a gap to be bridged between the current state and a desired one, or progress to be made towards a desired goal, or a change to be made. The purpose of the course is to bridge the gap or some part of it, to help students make progress or to effect the desired change.’ The better we understand the nature of this gap, the better we will be able to help our students bridge it. Therefore, this step includes two stages:

- A. **Define type of the need you will analyze:** Each student begins a course with their own perceived needs. Sometimes these are very specific, perhaps related to their studies, profession or experience. These general needs might also be thought of as long-term goals. Another type of need is related to the students’ current level of competence in the social media environment. This type of need is usually more easily perceived by the educator than the student. For example, during the first few lessons, the teacher may notice that their students have difficulty understanding some risks or they don’t distinguish between perceived harm and real harm online situations. Yet another type of need we should be aware of at the beginning of a course is not determined by the students or the teacher, but rather comes “from above”, handed down by ministries of education, official governmental agencies, etc.⁴⁰

B. Choose the proper method for needs analysis activities - gathering data and analyzing it is the second stage. There are several possible instruments like: Questionnaires (including turning questionnaires into a “social event” by having students do them in pairs⁴¹), board games, class surveys, discussion cards, ranking, writing an email, looking at the materials by students are other examples of classroom activities that can easily be adapted to get students express their needs. One final thing to bear in mind for both educators and students is that the goal of needs analysis is not to co-construct the perfect course, but rather to exchange information “so that the agendas of the teacher and the learner may be more closely aligned”⁴². This helps educators do their work more effectively, and it helps students better appreciate the learning experience they are about to take part in, as well as empowering them to be active participants in this experience right from the start.

C. Define the capacity for learning of your students - Recent research has demonstrated that children learn in unique ways and that our current “one-size-fits-all” educational system sometimes caters to a handful of students in each classroom, but not to all⁴³. Everyone has their own way of learning and if you know how they learn best that can assist their learning potential. There are in general eight individual learning styles⁴⁴:

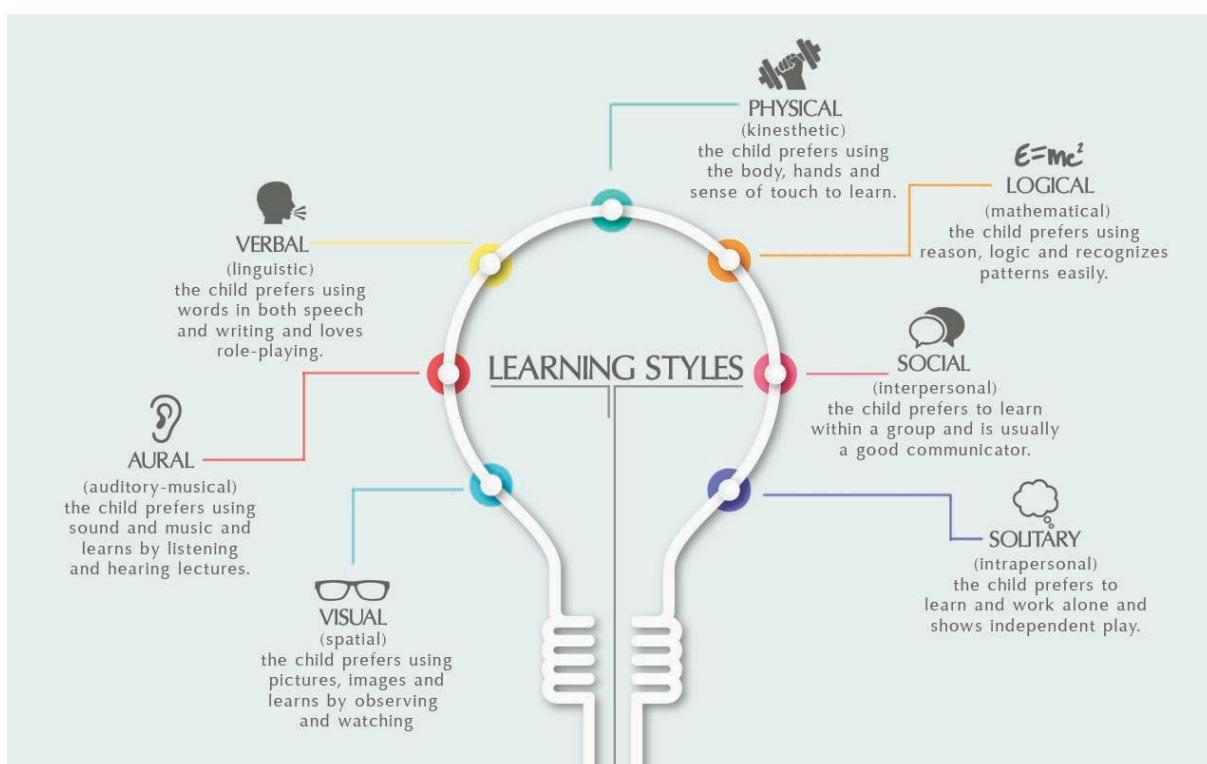


Figure 4. Learning styles⁴⁵

Learning styles describe unique preferences for how students like to learn and how they best remember new information⁴⁶. Identifying their learning style entails determining how you can teach the best. You can use this information to your advantage when preparing your class by employing learning methods that suit the students like giving case studies, constructing mind maps, using models, making presentations, etc. This can help you with in-class teaching as well as exam revision.

Students can achieve their learning potential more easily if they are educated in their preferred learning styles and also develop and practice skills in the other learning types⁴⁷. Knowing the characteristics of the learning styles can help the educator to decide how best to make use of them. The specifics of each learning style include⁴⁸:

Visual learners (sometimes called spatial) use pictures, colors and images to learn. They understand and like maps and charts. Their spatial reasoning is solid and can understand placement of objects in relationship to the environment with ease. The visual sense is managed by the occipital lobes at the back of the brain. Both the occipital and parietal lobes manage spatial understanding. Characteristics of a Visual Learner include the following:

- Usually sits at the front of the classroom if there is a choice;
- Information makes more sense if explained with a chart or graph;
- Makes outlines for everything;
- Copies what is written on the board;
- Sees colors with everything;
- Makes lists with bullets and stars;
- Enjoys visual technology.

Auditory (aural) learner is a child that retains information easier when the instruction is reinforced through sound. They enjoy music and can hear distinct notes. These kids gravitate to voice and song recordings, like podcasts or auditory lectures, and frequently sing to themselves. The temporal lobe in the brain handles the auditory information. The right temporal lobe is particularly important for music. Characteristics of an auditory learner include the following:

- Prefers lectures over reading the material;
- Frequently reads out loud to themselves;
- Likes oral reports;
- Participates in discussions;

- Likes debating;
- Uses songs or jingles to memorize important information;
- Remembers names easily.

Verbal or linguistic learner loves words in both speech and writing. These kids enjoy both listening to the spoken word and reading it. They find it easy to express themselves. The key areas in the brain responsible for this learning style are the temporal and frontal lobes. Characteristics of a verbal learner include the following:

- Usually an excellent memory;
- Will reread and rewrite notes;
- Create lists with keywords when studying;
- Enjoys role-playing when learning new concepts;
- Good at word games, rhymes and tongue twisters;
- Does well at getting thoughts down on paper.

Kinesthetic (physical) learner explores their world through touch. The child learns by moving their body and using their hands abundantly. They do best in large spaces when learning and delights in moving around, which is why this learning style makes sense for sensory seekers. Children who often use this learning style enjoy manipulating a model or actual object that is being taught. The cerebellum and the motor cortex (at the back of the frontal lobe) engages much of the child's physical movement processes. Characteristics of a kinesthetic learner include the following:

- Enjoys drawing and doing many kinds of art;
- Building with blocks and counting with objects come easily;
- Hands-on teaching is ideal for these kids;
- Reading or reciting while walking back and forth helps these learners;
- Thrives on lessons turned into art projects;
- Athletically gifted;
- Lives in the moment.

Logical learner (also known as mathematical) is skilled at mathematical and logical reasoning. These kids are able to solve number problems with ease. Logical learners excel at understanding cause and effect relationships. They attempt to classify and organize anything and everything because it helps their brain make sense of the material. The parietal lobes in the brain, especially the

left side, drive the logical thinking. Characteristics of the logical learner include the following:

- Enjoys strategy games;
- Classifies and regroups objects;
- Good with numbers;
- Likes to understand the why behind the answers;
- High level reasoning skills;
- Focuses on statistics;
- Likes math games and brain teasers.

Social (also referred to interpersonal) learner study best when they are in a group setting. This learner is usually a good communicator and enjoys talking to others. Social interactions and large bodies of people build positive feelings in this child. The frontal and temporal lobes of the brain handle much of a person's social activities. Characteristics of the social learner include the following:

- Excels in group learning
- Can read other people's emotions easily
- Socially intelligent
- Likes to teach others what they have learned
- Enjoys studying with sharing knowledge
- Communicates easily and loves dialogue

Solitary (intrapersonal) learner enjoys working alone and thrives on quiet surroundings. They seek to study and learn independently. They are great at self-managing goals and time-management. The intrapersonal child likes to play alone and displays a great imagination. The frontal and temporal lobes handle this type of learning as well. The limbic system also plays a role with mood and basic emotions. Characteristics of the solitary learner include the following:

- Prefers to work alone;
- Viewed as the quiet one in a group setting;
- In tune with feelings;
- Will try and find a quiet and comfortable place to study;
- Establishes personal learning or achievement goals;
- Likes to keep a journal.

Every student has a strategy they use to remember information more efficiently while studying. Some of them take notes; some make diagrams; some prefer to listen to lectures, etc. Most people are a combination of four styles of learning –

visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing. Sometimes they have a predominant style of learning and each of these styles has a complementary way of teaching. Students can achieve their learning potential with greater ease if they not only understand their preferred learning styles, but also develop and practice skills in the other learning styles to become a well-rounded learner. When the child is a well-rounded learner, they will be able to adapt in various educational, personal and social settings.

It is important to note that not everyone agrees on the types of learning styles, their names, or even their number. Recent studies and theories from psychologists and experts in the field suggest that there are anywhere between 3 to 170 different types of learning styles⁴⁹. Some recent **additions to the learning styles** include (see figure below)⁵⁰:



Figure 5. New learning styles⁵¹

Nature learners⁵² – these types of learners excel when in contact with nature. A nature learner's ideal study environment is a calm and relaxing environment. If we had to compare nature learners with another type, it would be tactile learners. The only difference is the nature part of this deal, as nature learners need to be outside to learn better. While learning in nature may not always be possible, teachers can still nurture this learning style in students by assigning

hands-on activities, having classes outdoors when possible, and using nature examples when explaining a new lesson.

D. Student demographic data⁵³ - in addition to student learning data, there are other data sources that affect student achievement. Student attendance data, race, ethnicity, gender, health data, and other sources can provide further context to student achievement and help educators identify opportunities for improved practice.

STEP 3:

Plan and design your classes, including topics, methodology of training, tools and materials that you will use. Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives⁵⁴ provides a helpful framework for identifying the observable and measurable skills you would like your students to learn. Bloom identified six types of cognitive processes and ordered these according to the increasing level of complexity involved: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation⁵⁵:

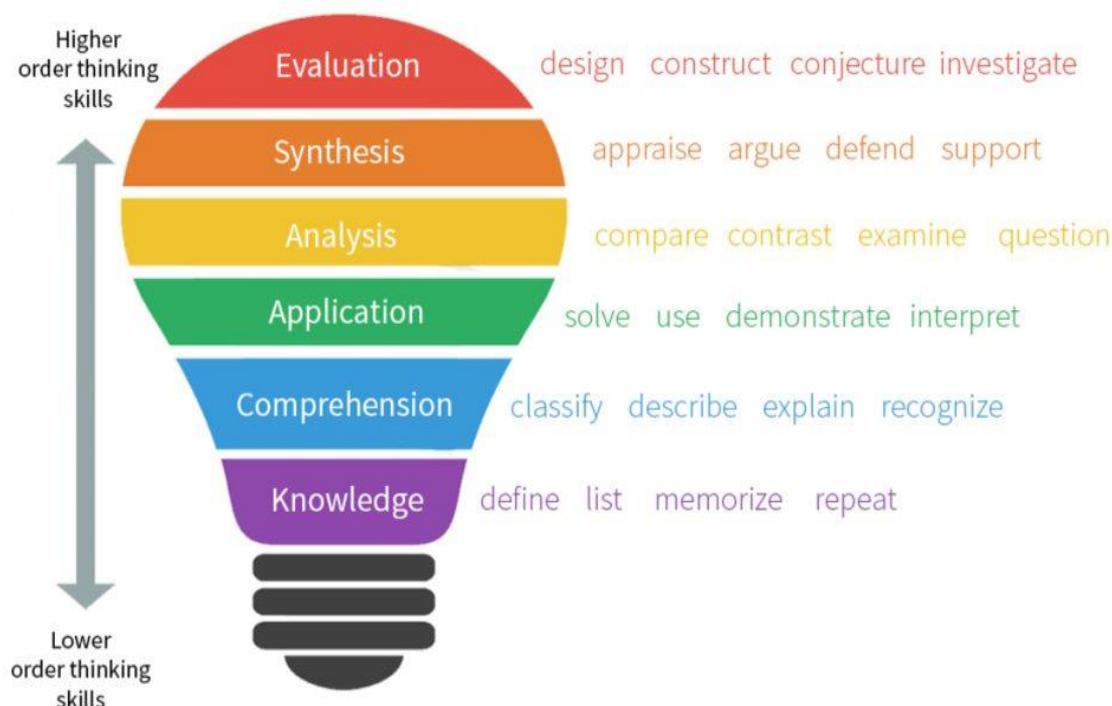


Figure 6. Bloom's taxonomy⁵⁶

You will see Bloom's Taxonomy often displayed as a pyramid hierarchy graphic to emphasize that each level is built on a foundation of the previous levels. Bloom's taxonomy is a powerful tool to help develop learning outcomes because it explains the process of learning:

- Before you can ***understand*** a concept, you must ***remember*** it;
- To ***apply*** a concept, you must first ***understand*** it;
- In order to ***evaluate*** a process, you must have ***analyzed*** it;
- To ***create*** an accurate conclusion, you must have completed a thorough ***evaluation***.

Like other taxonomies, Bloom's is hierarchical, meaning that learning at the higher levels is dependent on having attained prerequisite knowledge and skills at lower levels. There are different modifications of the cognitive domains of Bloom, as the one presented below:

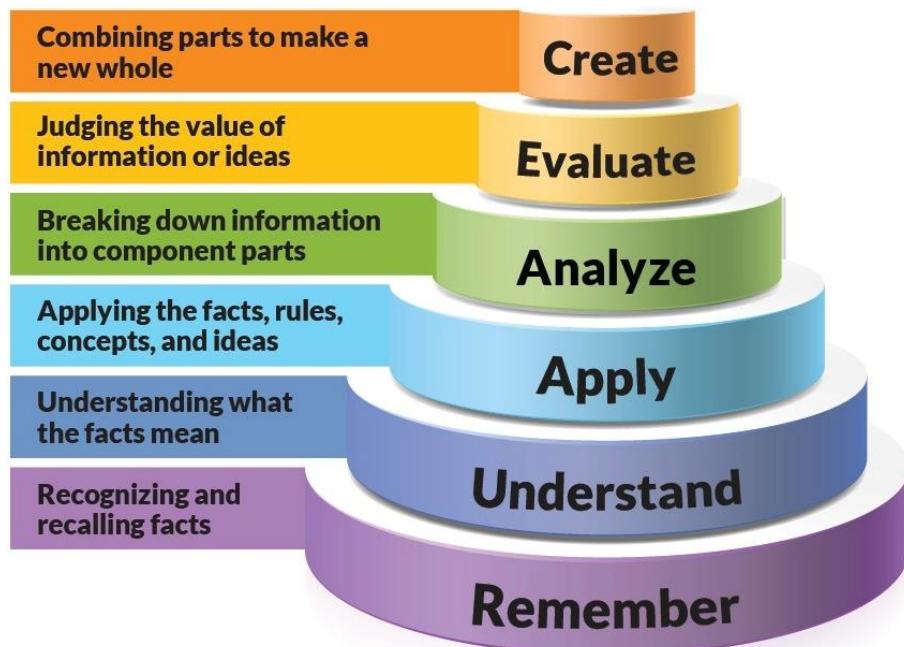


Figure 7. Bloom's taxonomy modification⁵⁷

For many, Bloom's Revised Taxonomy will be thought of simply as "Evaluation" becoming "Create", but for those who spend more time with the primary text of both the original and the updated version, there is considerably more thought given to critical concepts of teaching and learning⁵⁸.

These 6 levels can be used to structure the learning outcomes, lessons, and assessments of your course⁵⁹:

- **Remembering:** Retrieving, recognizing, and recalling relevant knowledge from long-term memory.
- **Understanding:** Constructing meaning from oral, written, and graphic messages through interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, and explaining.
- **Applying:** Carrying out or using a procedure for executing, or implementing.
- **Analyzing:** Breaking material into constituent parts, determining how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose through differentiating, organizing, and attributing.
- **Evaluating:** Making judgments based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing.
- **Creating:** Putting elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganizing elements into a new pattern or structure through generating, planning, or producing.

You will see Bloom's Taxonomy often displayed as a pyramid hierarchy graphic to emphasize that each level is built on a foundation of the previous levels. Bloom's taxonomy is a powerful tool to help develop learning outcomes because it explains the process of learning:

- Before you can **understand** a concept, you must **remember** it;
- To **apply** a concept, you must first **understand** it;
- In order to **evaluate** a process, you must have **analyzed** it;
- To **create** an accurate conclusion, you must have completed a thorough **evaluation**.

However, we don't always start with lower order skills and step all the way through the entire taxonomy for each concept you present in your course. That approach would become tedious – for both you and your students! Instead, start by considering the level of learners in your course:

1. Are lots of your students freshman? Is this an “Introduction to...” course? If so, many your learning outcomes may target the lower order Bloom's skills, because your students are building foundational knowledge. However, even in this situation we would strive to move a few of your outcomes into the **applying** and **analyzing** level, but getting too far up in the taxonomy could create frustration and unachievable goals.

2. Are most of your students juniors and seniors? Graduate students? Do your students have a solid foundation in much of the terminology and processes you will be working on your course? If so, then you should not have many ***remembering*** and ***understanding*** level outcomes. You may need a few, for any radically new concepts specific to your course. However, these advanced students should be able to master higher-order learning objectives. Too many lower-level outcomes might cause boredom or apathy.

Fortunately, there are “verb tables” to help identify which action verbs align with each level in Bloom’s Taxonomy. Bloom’s Taxonomy’s verbs – also known as power verbs or thinking verbs – are extraordinarily powerful instructional planning tools. There are plenty of modifications of the verbs according to the area of education. Some of them are presented below to help you find the most suitable for your needs:

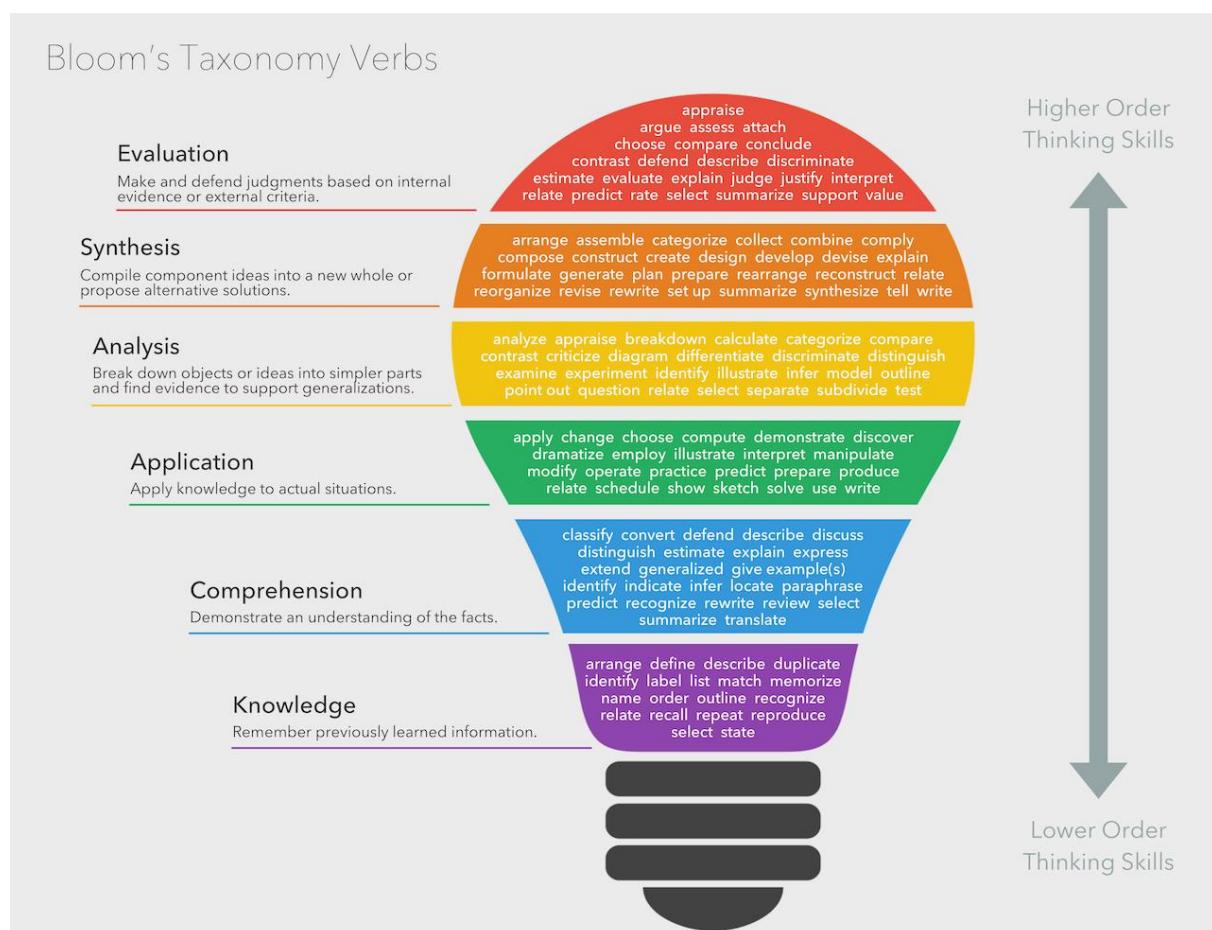


Figure 8. Bloom's taxonomy verbs⁶⁰

As research has suggested, they can be used for assessment design, curriculum design, lesson planning, personalizing and differentiating learning, and almost any other ‘thing’ a teacher – or student – has to do.

Table 1. Bloom's taxonomy verbs modification⁶¹

01	02	03	04	05	06
KNOWLEDGE: Define, Identify, Describe, Recognize, Tell, Explain, Recite, Memorize, Illustrate, Quote	UNDERSTAND: Summarize, Interpret, Classify, Compare, Contrast, Infer, Relate, Extract, Paraphrase, Cite	APPLY: Solve, Change, Relate, Complete, Use, Sketch, Teach, Articulate, Discover, Transfer	ANALYZE: Contrast, Connect, Relate, Devise, Correlate, Illustrate, Distill, Conclude, Categorize, Take Apart	EVALUATE: Criticize, Reframe, Judge, Devise, Defend, Appraise, Value, Prioritize, Plan, Grade, Reframe	CREATE: Design, Modify, Role-Play, Develop, Rewrite, Pivot, Modify, Collaborate, Invent, Write

Table 2. Bloom's verbs modification⁶²

Bloom's Level	Key Verbs (keywords)
Create	design, formulate, build, invent, create, compose, generate, derive, modify, develop
Evaluate	choose, support, relate, determine, defend, judge, grade, compare, contrast, argue, justify, support, convince, select, evaluate
Analyze	classify, break down, categorize, analyze, diagram, illustrate, criticize, simplify, associate
Apply	calculate, predict, apply, solve, illustrate, use, demonstrate, determine, model, perform, present
Understand	describe, explain, paraphrase, restate, give original examples of, summarize, contrast, interpret, discuss
Remember	list, recite, outline, define, name, match, quote, recall, identify, label, recognize

Since its publication in 1956, Bloom's Taxonomy has been a foundation of most modern education systems. While the overarching principles have remained the same, changes in understanding, experience and technology have seen the Taxonomy take on a number of different forms, for a number of different purposes and applications. The below overview shows the **progression** of Bloom's Taxonomy, how each thinking skill applies in **practice**, and examples of activities using **digital tools**⁶³:

Bloom's Digital Taxonomy

Bloom's taxonomy	Bloom's modified taxonomy	Bloom's extended digital taxonomy	Functional Levels	Activities with digital tools	
		Sharing	Publicly sharing, publishing, broadcasting	Contributing to open social networks, publishing, broadcasting, networking	Higher Order Thinking Skills
Evaluation	Creating	Creating	Designing, constructing, planning, producing, inventing, devising, making	Programming, filming, animating, blogging, video blogging, mixing, re-mixing, wiki-ing, videocasting, podcasting, directing	
Synthesis	Evaluating	Evaluating	Checking, hypothesising, critiquing, experimenting, judging, testing, detecting, monitoring	Blog commenting, reviewing, posting, moderating, collaborating, refactoring, testing	
Analysis	Analyzing	Conceptualizing	Comparing, organising, deconstructing, attributing, outlining, finding, structuring, integrating	Hacking, mashing, linking, validating, reverse engineering, cracking	
Application	Applying	Applying	Implementing, carrying out, using, executing	Running, loading, playing, operating, uploading, sharing with group, editing	
Comprehension	Understanding	Connecting	Interpreting, summarizing, inferring, paraphrasing, classifying, comparing, explaining, exemplifying	Boolean searches, advanced searches, blog journaling, tweeting, categorizing, tagging, commenting, annotating, subscribing	
Knowledge	Remembering	Doing	Recognizing, listing, describing, identifying, retrieving, naming, locating, finding	Bullet pointing, highlighting, bookmarking, group networking, shared bookmarking, searching	Lower Order Thinking Skills

Figure 9. Bloom's digital taxonomy⁶⁴

In conclusion the cognitive domain involves knowledge and the development of intellectual skills (Bloom et.al, 1956). This includes the recall or recognition of specific facts, procedural patterns, and concepts that serve in the development of intellectual abilities and skills. The framework elaborated by Bloom and his collaborators consisted of six major categories (*Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation*) starting from the simplest behavior to the most complex. The categories can be thought of as degrees of difficulties. That is, the first ones must normally be mastered before the next ones can take place:

THE COGNITIVE DOMAINS OF BLOOM⁶⁵

1. KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge “involves the recall of specifics and universals, the recall of methods and processes, or the recall of a pattern, structure, or setting.”

- **Key Words (Verbs):** Defines, States, Describes, Identifies, Knows, Labels, Enlists, Matches, Names, Outlines, Recalls, Tells, Recognizes, Reproduces, Selects, Arranges, Quotes, Repeat, and Enumerates.
- **Examples (Learning Objectives):** The student will be able to; Define a term. Recite few verses from the text. Label different parts of diagram.

2. COMPREHENSION

Comprehension “refers to a type of understanding or apprehension such that the individual knows what is being communicated and can make use of the material or idea being communicated without necessarily relating it to other material or seeing its fullest implications.”

- **Key Words (Verbs):** Comprehends, Converts, Describes, Distinguishes, Estimates, Explains, Extends, Generalizes, Gives an example, Infers, Interprets, Paraphrases, Predicts, Rewrites, Summarizes, and Translates.
- **Examples (Learning Objectives):** The student will be able to; Give an example of a scientific fact from daily life. Explain a concept or piece of knowledge. Generalize the results of a specific situation.

3. APPLICATION

Application refers to the “use of abstractions in particular and concrete situations.”

- **Key Words (Verbs):** Applies, Adapt, Ascertain, Assign, Changes, Computes, Constructs, Demonstrates, Discovers, Manipulates, Modifies, Operates, Predicts, Prepares, Produces, Relates, Shows, Solves, and Uses.
- **Examples (Learning Objectives):** The student will be able to; Uses a formula to solve given set of values. Apply concepts and principles to new situations. Demonstrate correct usage of grammar rules to form sentences

4. ANALYSIS

Analysis represents the “breakdown of a communication into its constituent elements or parts such that the relative hierarchy of ideas is made clear and/or the relations between ideas expressed are made explicit.”

- **Key Words (Verbs):** Analyzes, Breaks down, Compares, Contrasts, Draws, Deconstructs, Differentiates, Discriminates, Distinguishes, Identifies, Illustrates, Infers, Outlines, Relates, Diagrams, Selects, and Separates.
- **Examples (Learning Objectives):** The student will be able to; Identify the required parts of speech from a given paragraph. Compare and contrast the two presidential speeches in writing. Analyzing the organizational structure of a work (of art, music, or writing).

5. SYNTHESIS

Synthesis involves the “putting together of elements and parts so as to form a whole.”

- **Key Words (Verbs):** Categorizes, Combines, Compiles, Composes, Creates, Devises, Designs, Explains, Generates, Modifies, Organizes, Plans, Rearranges, Reconstructs, Relates, Reorganizes, Revises, Rewrites, Summarizes, and Writes.
- **Examples (Learning Objectives):** The student will be able to; Write a creative essay, story or poem on the given topic. Develop a plan for your school to save money. Formulating a new scheme for classifying objects.

6. EVALUATION

Evaluation engenders “judgments about the value of material and methods for given purposes.”

- **Key Words (Verbs):** Judges, Comments, Appraises, Compares, Concludes, Contrasts, Criticizes, Critiques, Defends, Describes, Discriminates, Evaluates, Explains, Interprets, Justifies, Relates, Supports, and Summarizes.
- **Examples (Learning Objectives):** The student will be able to; Critically appreciate the given piece of literature. Decide which proposed plan is the best. Justify the actions of your favorite historical figure.

When you design your training program remember that you need to focus your attention on course level and lesson level outcomes. And here comes the Bloom’s taxonomy to help you.

How Bloom's works with course level and lesson level outcomes⁶⁶?

- **Course level outcomes (objectives)** are broad. You may only have 3-5 course level outcomes. They would be difficult to measure directly because they overarch the topics of your entire course;
- **Lesson level outcomes (objectives)** are what we use to demonstrate that a student has mastery of the course level outcomes. We do this by building lesson level outcomes that build toward the course level outcome. For example, a student might need to demonstrate mastery of 8 lesson level outcomes in order to demonstrate mastery of one course level outcome;
- **An example:** your course level verb might be an ***Applying*** level verb, “illustrate.” Your lesson level verbs can be from any Bloom’s level that is equal or below this level (applying, understanding, or remembering).

After you have defined the objectives of each lesson and the course you can continue with developing the other elements, included in your training plan:



Figure 10. Training plan⁶⁷

STEP 4:

Choose and implement the training programs from the handbook (you can use the methodology as a complementary tool if you wish). Letting your students know what they will be learning and doing in class will help keep them more engaged and on track. Providing a meaningful organization of the class time can help students not only remember better, but also follow your presentation and understand the rationale behind the planned learning activities. You can share your lesson plan by writing a brief agenda on the whiteboard or telling students explicitly what they will be learning and doing in class⁶⁸.

STEP 5:

Evaluating training effectiveness – evaluating the effectiveness of training programs is crucial to make informed decisions for future improvement. By systematically evaluating training effectiveness, educators can optimize their training initiatives, ensure continuous improvement, and deliver high-quality programs that drive students growth and contribute to their success. The evaluation must be performed following several stages (see figure below):



Figure 11. Evaluating training effectiveness⁶⁹

It's important to remember that managing a training plan is an iterative process. As you progress in the education and learn more about your requirements and training needs, you might have to update your plan.

IV. PROTECTION PROGRAMS, METHODS AND ACTIONS

This chapter includes targeted training programs and actions for educating young people about the methods they can use to protect themselves in social media, pedagogical and psychological approaches for acquiring specific protection skills and other educational materials, games, cases etc. The purpose of this chapter is to help young people learn about methods and principles of prevention of network risks, the consequences of misuse and dependence on the Internet.

The training programs were defined based on research of the current online risks for young people, using social media⁷⁰ and the research of the methods for prevention of risks, related to social networks among young people⁷¹ in partner countries. The results from both studies were used to define the most important dimensions for future training of young people to make them safe online.

The handbook includes the **following training programs:**

- Program 1:** Social media risks
- Program 2:** Digital media literacy
- Program 3:** Critical thinking
- Program 4:** Fake news and disinformation
- Program 5:** Personal data protection
- Program 6:** Safe & positive communication
- Program 7:** Online harassment
- Program 8:** Digital reputation & digital image
- Program 9:** Mental health and well-being online
- Program 10:** Positive online engagement
- Program 11:** Social exclusion and isolation
- Program 12:** Dangerous viral trends
- Program 13:** Influencers
- Program 14:** Digital citizenship & digital responsibility

PROGRAM 1:

SOCIAL MEDIA RISKS



PROGRAM 1: SOCIAL MEDIA RISKS

Today, a child as young as eight years old can easily gain independent access to the internet in one form or another. A recent study, carried out on 38,000 children aged 8-12 across 29 different countries, found that over half were exposed to at least one online-related threat. Such threats include reduced digital empathy – leading to increased anxiety and social pressures among their peers – excessive screen time, digital addiction, cyber-bullying, online grooming, digital identity theft, online privacy mismanagement and exposure to digital disinformation operations. What's even more alarming is that young people from emerging countries were 1.3 times more exposed than their peers living in digitally advanced countries⁷².

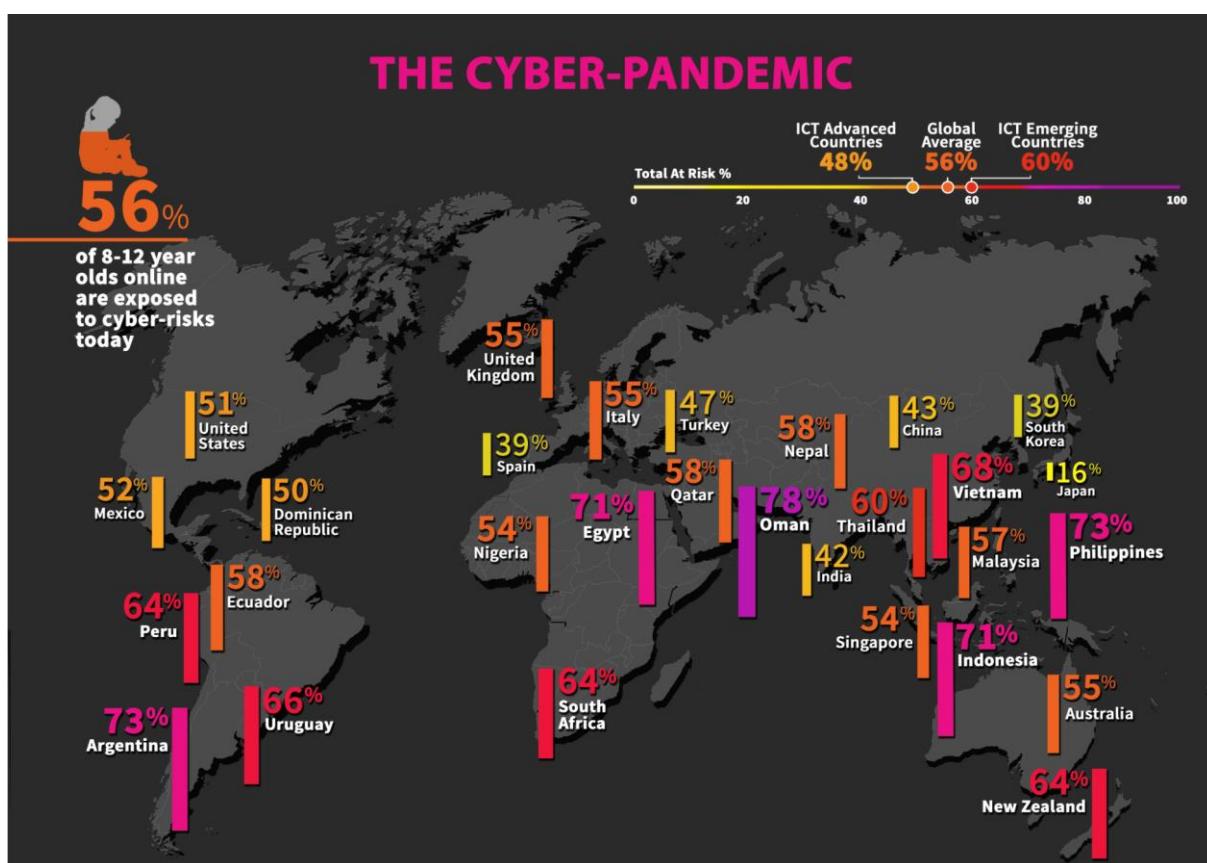


Figure 12. The cyber-pandemic in 2018⁷³

The fact that a child can gain access to the online world from the palm of his or her hand, at any instance and in any place, should be of utmost concern to parents and civil society organizations, educators, law enforcers, government, the media, consumer platforms and brands. Otherwise, the consequences can be devastating: in some parts of the world, social media use by unprepared individuals has been linked to a rise in adolescent suicide rates. What is perhaps

less obvious, but just as critical to society, is the link between digital intelligence and the spread of digital misinformation (also known as “fake news”). The capacity of disinformation outlets to thrive has been linked to low digital intelligence in the users who share such information. Without sound digital information discerning and critical thinking skills, ingrained from a young age, people are more likely to share false information without understanding the consequences. Other, less obvious consequences of low digital intelligence include succumbing to online manipulation, poor awareness of one’s personal data and reduced online privacy⁷⁴.

Internet safety should be a primary concern for all users, and everyone should be aware of the potential risks and appropriate responses. Recognizing risks and being able to respond appropriately is critical to maintaining online safety. These risks may take the form of cyberbullying, harassment, stalking, identity theft, or exposure to inappropriate or harmful content.

In today's digital age, social networks have become an integral part of our daily lives, including in the education sector. The merging of education and social networks has opened up new possibilities for teaching and learning, bringing both face-to-face and distance learning forms into the digital environment. While these platforms offer a myriad of benefits, they also pose various risks, making the need for a comprehensive guide to preventing social networking risks all the more important.

In face-to-face learning settings, social networks play an important role in enriching classroom discussions, facilitating student collaboration and engagement, and improving teacher-student communication. These digital platforms have the power to complement traditional teaching methods and foster a dynamic learning environment. However, they also present challenges, such as invasion of privacy, cyberbullying, misinformation, and distraction from learning objectives.

This handbook can serve as a guide for both educators and students by providing strategies to overcome the potential risks associated with the use of social networking sites. It promotes digital literacy by encouraging users to identify trustworthy sources of information, understand privacy issues and distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate online behavior. This awareness is particularly important to prevent students from falling victim to harmful online practices.

In distance learning settings, social networks are even more crucial as they often form the basis of virtual classrooms. Online platforms facilitate continuous,

synchronous and asynchronous communication, making learning accessible regardless of geographical constraints. However, reliance on these platforms also increases exposure to the risks associated with them. The guide can prove invaluable in such settings, providing educators, students and even parents with a concept for ensuring safer online interaction. It can guide users towards maintaining an optimal balance between openness for educational collaboration and privacy for data protection. This is vital as learners may share sensitive information on these platforms without realizing the potential risks. Furthermore, the guide can help build a positive online culture by promoting respect, empathy and responsibility among users. It can guide the community to report any harmful behavior, thus promoting a safer and healthier online learning environment.

The Social Networking Risk Prevention Guide is an essential tool for both face-to-face and distance learning. By informing users of the potential dangers associated with social networking and providing preventative measures, it can ensure a safer and more productive learning experience.

In order to extend the relevance of the Social Networking Risk Prevention Handbook, it is necessary to go deeper into the specific benefits it offers for both face-to-face and distance learning scenarios. The Social Media Risk Prevention Handbook is a multifaceted tool that addresses different aspects of the learning experience. It is not only a guide to preventing potential pitfalls, but also a valuable resource for fostering a positive and enriching digital learning environment.

Applying Common Understanding: The guide can serve as a common starting point for all participants in the educational process - students, teachers and parents. It helps to standardize expectations and standards related to the use of social networking sites by promoting a common understanding of what constitutes safe and responsible online behavior. This common understanding is critical to ensuring consistent behavior across individuals and platforms.

Empowering consumers: knowledge is power and by offering a comprehensive overview of potential risks and mitigation strategies, the guide empowers consumers to take control of their online experiences. It gives them the tools they need to deal with issues such as cyberbullying, identity theft, online harassment and more. This empowerment is critical to building resilience and promoting self-regulation among learners, which is integral to both traditional and distance learning.

Promoting digital citizenship: In a broader sense, the handbook contributes to the development of digital citizenship - the responsible and appropriate use of technology. It encourages users to respect digital rights and responsibilities, to understand and respect digital law and to practice digital etiquette. Such skills are not only necessary for safe online interaction, but are becoming increasingly important life skills in our digital world.

Enhancing parental interaction: The handbook can also serve as a bridge between schools and parents, especially in the context of distance learning. Many parents may feel under-prepared to monitor their children's online activity or may be unaware of the potential risks. The guide can guide them on how to monitor their children's digital interactions, reinforce safe online practices at home and foster a supportive environment for digital learning.

Assistance in formulating and implementing strategies: the Guide can guide educational institutions in developing, implementing and maintaining comprehensive strategies for using social networking in the educational environment. A well-defined strategy is essential to maintaining order, promoting equity, and ensuring a safe digital learning environment. The guide can provide the necessary foundation and best practices for effective policy development.

Promoting ethical behavior online: the Social Networking Risk Prevention Handbook plays a key role in promoting ethical behavior online. The web is a global platform where interactions transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. By outlining the consequences of actions and establishing guidelines for respect and understanding, the handbook promotes an environment that does not encourage discrimination, hate speech and other negative behaviors. It promotes empathy and understanding - vital aspects in our increasingly interconnected world.

Helping to resolve conflict: Conflict can arise in the digital space as it does in the physical world. These conflicts can range from misunderstandings to serious cases of harassment or stalking. The handbook can offer guidance on how to resolve conflicts in the online space by providing strategies for communication, negotiation and reporting issues to the relevant authorities.

Promoting critical thinking: With the overload of information available online, it is increasingly important for users to develop critical thinking skills. The guide can help users understand how to identify reliable sources of information, distinguish facts from misinformation and approach online content with a

questioning and analytical mindset. This not only contributes to a safer digital environment but also enriches the learning experience.

Providing a tool for digital wellbeing: Excessive use of social media can lead to digital fatigue, which can affect mental health and wellbeing. The toolkit can provide guidance on maintaining a healthy balance between online and offline activities, setting boundaries for digital consumption and recognizing the signs of digital fatigue.

Preparing for the future: as the digital world continues to evolve rapidly, being able to navigate social media use is a valuable skill for the future. Many jobs and careers now have a digital aspect, and understanding how to navigate the online world responsibly and safely can provide students with a competitive edge. The handbook plays an essential role in preparing students for this reality.

The importance of the Social Media Risk Prevention Handbook cannot be overstated. It acts as a comprehensive resource, making users aware of the potential dangers of social networking and providing them with strategies to ensure a safer and more productive online experience. Whether it is face-to-face or distance learning, it is an invaluable tool in our increasingly digital world.

In conclusion, the Social Media Risk Prevention Handbook is an indispensable tool in today's educational process, which is increasingly intertwined with the digital sphere. Its importance is highlighted in both face-to-face and distance learning settings, where social networks significantly shape communication, collaboration and the overall learning process.

Encouraging critical thinking, the guide helps to distinguish facts from misinformation in an age of information overload. It also provides resources for maintaining digital well-being, which is a growing concern in our hyperconnected world. Finally, it prepares students for a future in which digital literacy will be one of the most in-demand skills.

That's why the handbook is not only a protective shield against potential digital threats, but also a compass that navigates users towards a productive, safe and responsible digital life. Its emphasis on creating a positive and enriching digital learning environment makes it a cornerstone of modern education.

Seeking help in risky social media situations refers to taking appropriate action when faced with potential harm or danger online. Skills like this are crucial for several important reasons:

- **Personal Safety:** Online platforms can expose people to a variety of risks, including cyberbullying, harassment, stalking, fraud, and even threats of

physical harm. Seeking help allows people to protect themselves and take the necessary steps to ensure their safety;

- **Emotional well-being:** Negative experiences on social networks, such as cyberbullying or targeted bullying, can have a serious impact on an individual's mental and emotional well-being. Help-seeking provides an opportunity to address these issues, seek support from professionals or trusted individuals, and alleviate the emotional stress caused by online risks;
- **Identifying and reporting abuse:** Many social media platforms have reporting mechanisms to deal with offensive or harmful content. By seeking help, people can report incidents of harassment, hate speech, or other forms of abuse, allowing platform moderators to take appropriate action. Reporting such incidents not only protects the individual, but also contributes to creating a safer online environment for others;
- **Preventing escalation:** Addressing risks in their early stages can prevent situations from escalating further. Seeking help allows for timely intervention and implementation of measures to mitigate risks and potentially prevent further harm. Early intervention is key to stopping the spread of harmful behavior and protecting yourself and others from the consequences of online risks;
- **Legal considerations:** In certain cases, online risks may violate laws and regulations. Seeking help enables people to understand their rights, seek legal advice if necessary and take appropriate action against perpetrators. Incident reporting can also contribute to the gathering of evidence, which can be crucial in legal proceedings;
- **Building support networks:** Seeking help creates opportunities to connect with supportive people, such as friends, family or professionals, who can provide guidance, advice and emotional support. These support networks play a vital role in helping people cope with difficult situations, providing perspective and offering help when needed;
- **Raising awareness:** By seeking help and reporting risks, people contribute to raising awareness of the prevalence and impact of online dangers. This can lead to improved policies, better moderation practices, and increased education about online safety for both individuals and communities.



PROGRAM 1: SOCIAL MEDIA RISKS

TRAINING METHODS AND ACTIONS

The purpose of this training program is to educate participants about the importance of seeking help in situations of risk on social networks and to provide them with practical strategies for dealing with online risks. The program aims to empower participants to protect themselves, support others and create a safer online environment.

Duration: 60 minutes

Materials needed: Projector or screen, handouts or scenario worksheets. Writing materials (pens/ pencils). Flipchart or whiteboard with markers.

Introduction: Discuss the importance of seeking help in risky situations on social media, emphasizing personal safety, emotional well-being and harm prevention (5 minutes).

UNDERSTANDING ONLINE RISKS

Activity: Presentation

Duration: 15 minutes

Instruction: Use a projector or display to present key information about common social networking risks such as cyberbullying, harassment, fraud and privacy breaches. Discuss the potential consequences of these risks for individuals and communities. Emphasize the importance of early intervention and seeking help to mitigate risks.

SHARE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Activity: Group discussion

Duration: 15 minutes

Instruction: Encourage participants to share their personal experiences or observations about online risks and situations where seeking help was critical. Facilitate a group discussion by asking questions such as:

- What are some common online risks you have encountered or witnessed?
- Have you ever sought help or supported someone to deal with online risks? How did it turn out?
- What barriers or challenges do you face when seeking help in online situations?

HELP-SEEKING SCENARIO

Activity: Scenario-based discussion

Duration: 20 minutes

Instruction: Help-seeking strategies are important. Distribute handouts or worksheets containing various online risk scenarios to participants. In small groups, ask participants to read and discuss each scenario, brainstorming help-seeking strategies in each situation. After the discussion, ask each group to share their strategies with the larger group, fostering a collaborative learning environment. Start a discussion about the effectiveness of different strategies and their potential impact on resolving online risks.

KEY POINTS

Activity: discussion

Duration: 5 minutes

Instruction: Summarize the key points discussed during the exercise program. Emphasize the importance of seeking help for both personal well-being and creating a safer online environment. Provide participants with additional resources, such as helpline numbers, online safety guides, or support organizations. Encourage participants to share what they learn with others and to be proactive in supporting and protecting themselves and others on social media.

PROGRAM 2:

DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY



PROGRAM 2: DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY

Today, many communication competencies are needed to be effective in society. Digital and media literacy includes the ability to access, analyze, compose, reflect, and take action in the world. It's a broad and expansive array of life skills. It's absolutely essential for educators to help strengthen children's self-expression and advocacy, reasoning, critical thinking, and communication skills. Social development, self-confidence, conflict-resolution skills, and sensitivity to the social responsibilities of using 21st century technologies are habits of mind that enable children to thrive. The following list outlines the kind of competencies that are increasingly valued both inside and outside the classroom⁷⁵:

Access

- Listening skills;
- Reading comprehension;
- Using appropriate technology tools;
- Asking questions;
- Gathering information using multiple sources;
- Applying information to solve a problem.

Analysis

- Understanding how symbols work and how they are used;
- Recognizing particular types (genres) of messages;
- Identifying authorship, message purpose, and target audience with a variety of texts;
- Recognizing evidence of quality and credibility in different types of messages.

Composition

- Speaking to an individual and demonstrating listening skills;
- Speaking to a large group and responding to feedback;
- Communicating a personal reaction and expressing a point of view;
- Selecting messages and texts to use, respond to, remix, and combine in a creative way;

- Composing, writing, and creating images to inform, persuade, and entertain;
- Composing in a variety of formats, including emails, reviews, reports, film scripts, music lyrics, web pages, nonfiction, fiction, and other literary genres;
- Composing for a variety of audiences, including peers, family members, educators, special interest groups, government leaders, and members of the general public.

Reflection

- Recognizing and valuing relationships and engaging in socially appropriate behavior;
- Brainstorming and contributing ideas;
- Staying on task and following directions;
- Using good judgment and social responsibility when communicating with others;
- Exercising leadership, integrity, and accountability;
- Offering feedback to, helping, and teaching others.

Taking Action

- Participating in a creative community;
- Sharing and expressing ideas with others;
- Being aware of and sensitive to differences among people;
- Making connections between current events, the community, and the self;
- Generating ideas in order to improve a thing or an event;
- Collaborating on solving a meaningful real-world problem.

How Has Literacy Changed?

The concept of literacy is not fixed and static. It's based on the changing needs of people in a society. Today we recognize that literacy is not just reading and writing (see table below):

Table 3. Development of literacy⁷⁶

Rhetoric Literacy	Speaking and listening
Print Literacy	Reading and writing
Visual Literacy	Image design, interpretation, and creative composition
Information Literacy	Information access, retrieval, evaluation, and usage
Media Literacy	Analyzing messages from media and popular culture and composing with technology tools
Critical Literacy	Recognizing and resisting power relationships in messages and information
Computer Literacy	Understanding and using computer technologies effectively
News Literacy	Understanding and evaluating news and current events
Digital Literacy	Being a socially responsible user of the Internet and social media

In today's digital era, where information is readily available at our fingertips, media literacy and digital literacy have become essential skills for individuals to effectively navigate the vast landscape of media and information. With the rapid growth of technology and the proliferation of online platforms, it is crucial to understand the significance of media literacy and digital literacy and how they contribute to our ability to consume, evaluate, and critically analyze information. In this article, we will explore the concepts of media literacy and digital literacy, their importance, and practical ways to enhance these skills.

Media Literacy⁷⁷

Media literacy refers to the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in various forms. It involves understanding the messages conveyed through different media channels, including television, radio, print, and the Internet. Media literacy empowers individuals to question and critically assess the information they encounter, identify potential biases, and differentiate between credible and unreliable sources. In today's media landscape, where misinformation and disinformation can spread rapidly, media literacy is crucial for responsible consumption. By being media literate, individuals can become active participants in shaping public discourse, make informed decisions, and avoid falling prey to misleading narratives.

Digital Literacy⁷⁸

Digital literacy encompasses the skills required to effectively use digital technologies and navigate the digital realm. It involves the ability to locate, evaluate, create, and communicate information using digital platforms and tools. Digital literacy goes beyond basic computer literacy, incorporating skills such as online safety, privacy, cybersecurity, digital communication, and critical thinking. Digital literacy is essential in a society where the internet is a primary source of information, communication, and entertainment. It enables individuals to harness the benefits of technology, engage in online communities, protect their digital identities, and adapt to the ever-evolving digital landscape.

The Interplay Between Media Literacy and Digital Literacy

Media literacy and digital literacy are closely intertwined and complement each other. Digital platforms have become the primary medium through which media is disseminated, and being digitally literate is crucial for engaging with media effectively. Conversely, media literacy is essential for understanding and critically evaluating the information encountered in digital spaces.

Similarities Between Media Literacy and Digital Literacy

- **Information Evaluation** - Both media literacy and digital literacy involve the ability to critically evaluate and analyze information. They emphasize the importance of questioning sources, identifying biases, and distinguishing between reliable and unreliable information.
- **Critical Thinking** - Both literacies promote critical thinking skills. They encourage individuals to think critically about the messages they encounter, understand the underlying intent, and evaluate the credibility and potential impact of the information.
- **Communication and Creation** - Media literacy and digital literacy emphasize the skills of effective communication and content creation. They encourage individuals to create and share meaningful, responsible, and engaging content using various media formats and digital platforms.

Differences Between Media Literacy and Digital Literacy

- **Scope** - Media literacy encompasses a broader range of media forms, including traditional media such as television, radio, and print, while digital literacy specifically focuses on digital technologies and online platforms.
- **Medium Specificity** - Media literacy addresses the messages conveyed through different media channels, including both traditional and digital platforms. Digital literacy, on the other hand, primarily focuses on navigating the digital realm, understanding digital tools, and effectively utilizing digital platforms.
- **Technological Emphasis** - Digital literacy places a greater emphasis on technological skills and understanding digital tools, including online safety, privacy, cybersecurity, and digital communication. Media literacy, while incorporating digital aspects, may not delve as deeply into these specific technological aspects.
- **Contextual Considerations** - Media literacy often emphasizes the socio-cultural and historical context of media messages, examining how they are produced, distributed, and consumed. Digital literacy, while acknowledging the importance of context, places more emphasis on individual digital skills and digital citizenship in the online environment.

In summary, while media literacy and digital literacy share similarities in terms of information evaluation and critical thinking, they differ in scope, medium specificity, technological emphasis, and contextual considerations. Both literacies are essential in today's information age, but they bring distinct perspectives to understanding and engaging with media and digital technologies.

Importance of digital media literacy today

- **Critical Thinking and Evaluation** - In the era of information overload, media literacy, and digital literacy are vital for individuals to develop critical thinking skills. They enable us to evaluate and analyze information critically, helping us navigate the vast amount of content available and make informed decisions.
- **Understanding Media Influence** - Media literacy allows us to understand the power of media and its influence on society. It equips us with the ability to recognize and question biases, stereotypes, and manipulation within media messages, empowering us to consume media more responsibly.
- **Combating Misinformation and Disinformation** - With the rise of misinformation and disinformation, media literacy is crucial in combating the spread of false or misleading information. By being media literate, we can verify sources, fact-check information, and recognize the signs of unreliable or deceptive content, thereby reducing the impact of misinformation.
- **Responsible Digital Citizenship** - Digital literacy plays a pivotal role in promoting responsible digital citizenship. It educates individuals on online safety, privacy protection, digital etiquette, and responsible online behavior. Digital literacy empowers individuals to protect themselves from online threats, engage respectfully in digital communities, and contribute positively to the digital sphere.
- **Empowerment and Active Participation** - Media literacy and digital literacy empower individuals to be active participants in the information age. By honing these skills, we can create and share meaningful content, engage in productive discussions, and contribute to shaping public discourse. This active participation fosters a sense of empowerment, as we become informed, critical, and discerning consumers and creators of media and digital content.

- **Lifelong Learning and Adaptability** - Media literacy and digital literacy are essential skills for lifelong learning. In a rapidly evolving digital landscape, these literacies help individuals adapt to new technologies, platforms, and information sources. By staying updated and skilled in media and digital literacy, individuals can navigate the changing landscape with confidence and continue to learn and grow.
- **Citizen Empowerment and Democracy** - Media literacy and digital literacy are fundamental for the functioning of democratic societies. They empower citizens to be well-informed participants in democratic processes, enabling them to make informed choices, engage in constructive dialogue, and hold media and institutions accountable.

In an era dominated by an overwhelming amount of information and the fast-paced evolution of technology, media literacy, and digital literacy are indispensable skills. By cultivating these skills, individuals can navigate the digital landscape with confidence, discernment, and critical thinking. By becoming media literate and digitally literate, we empower ourselves to be active participants in the information age, making informed decisions, fostering meaningful engagement, and contributing to a more informed and connected society.

Social media literacy

Social media literacy refers to the ability to critically analyze, interpret, and create messages within and across the various platforms used for social interaction online. It involves understanding how these networks function, the role they play in society, and the potential consequences they have on individuals and communities. This skill set covers a wide range of competencies, including:

- Identifying the source of a given message and assessing its credibility and reliability.
- Recognizing the use of specific strategies such as persuasion, disinformation or propaganda.
- Understanding how personal data is collected, used and shared by social networking platforms.
- Interpret and evaluate different types of content, such as news, advertisements, and user-generated content.

- Create and share content responsibly, considering its potential impact and consequences.
- Understanding the role of algorithms and personalization in shaping what content is presented to users.
- Recognizing potential privacy and security threats such as phishing, cyberbullying and identity theft.

Social media literacy is vital in today's digital age, enabling people to fully participate in a digitally mediated world, make informed decisions and critically engage with digital media.

Digital media literacy training

Media literacy training is extremely important for young people in today's digital age. Here are some compelling reasons why it is extremely important to provide young people with media literacy education:

- **Critical Thinking Skills:** Media literacy training gives young people the critical thinking skills needed to navigate the vast and complex media landscape. They learn to question, analyze and evaluate media messages, distinguishing between fact and opinion, identifying bias and recognizing potential manipulation or misinformation.
- **Information Evaluation:** With the proliferation of online content, it is vital for young people to develop the ability to evaluate the credibility and reliability of information sources. Media literacy training enables them to assess the accuracy, authority, relevance and timeliness of information, reducing the risk of falling victim to misinformation or fake news.
- **Empowering digital citizenship:** Media literacy training promotes responsible and informed digital citizenship. Young people learn about their rights and responsibilities as media consumers and creators, including ethical behavior, respect for intellectual property, online privacy and responsible content sharing. This knowledge enables them to contribute positively to digital communities.
- **Influence of networks and body image:** Networks play an important role in shaping societal standards of beauty, which can negatively affect the self-esteem and body image of young people. Media literacy training helps young people develop media literacy skills to critically analyze and

challenge unrealistic portrayals, promoting body positivity, self-acceptance and resilience against harmful media influences.

- **Online safety and cyberbullying:** Media literacy training addresses the importance of online safety, providing young people with the knowledge and skills to protect themselves from cyberbullying, online bullying and other digital risks. They learn about privacy settings, responsible online behavior, and strategies for responding to and reporting offensive or harmful content.
- **Media production and creativity:** Media literacy training goes beyond consumption and empowers young people to become active creators of media content. They learn to express themselves effectively through a variety of media platforms, developing their creativity, critical communication skills and the ability to make informed choices when creating and sharing content.
- **Social engagement:** Media literacy is essential for active and informed citizenship. Young people need to understand how networks influence public opinion, political discourse and the democratic process. Media literacy training encourages them to critically engage with media representations, participate in civic discussions and make informed decisions as responsible citizens.
- **Career opportunities:** Media literacy is increasingly becoming an in-demand skill in a variety of professions. Media literacy training provides young people with a competitive advantage, enabling them to navigate the media landscape professionally and ethically. It opens doors to careers in journalism, marketing, advertising, media production and digital communication.

By investing in media literacy training for young people, we empower them to become discerning media consumers, responsible digital citizens and active participants in shaping the media landscape. Media literacy skills are critical to their personal growth, academic success and future contribution to society, ensuring they are well prepared to navigate the opportunities and challenges of the digital world.



PROGRAM 2: DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY

TRAINING METHODS AND ACTIONS

Objective: The objective of this exercise program is to improve the participants' understanding of media and digital literacy in the context of social networks. The program aims to develop critical thinking skills, encourage responsible online behavior and enable participants to effectively navigate social networks. During the exercise program, create a safe and inclusive environment that encourages participants to express their opinions and perspectives. Emphasize the importance of respectful dialogue and understanding different points of view. Consider including real-life examples or case studies related to participant demographics or interests to improve engagement and relevance.

Duration: 90 minutes

Required materials:

- Projector or display
- Handouts or worksheets with media examples
- Writing materials (pens/pencils)
- Flip chart or white board with colored markers

INTRODUCTION

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 10 minutes

Instructions: Discuss the importance of media and digital literacy in social networks, emphasizing the need for critical thinking, responsible behavior and the ability to use social networks safely.

FUNDAMENTALS OF MEDIA LITERACY

Activity: Presentation

Duration: 20 minutes

Instructions: Use a projector or screen to present key media literacy concepts, including understanding media messages, analyzing techniques and biases, and recognizing media influence on society. Discuss the specific challenges and opportunities posed by social networks in terms of media consumption and production.

ANALYZING MEDIA EXAMPLES

Activity: Small group discussions

Duration: 30 minutes

Instructions: Distribute handouts or worksheets containing social media examples, such as news articles, social media posts, or online advertisements. In small groups, ask participants to analyze the media examples using media literacy skills. Encourage them to discuss the following aspects:

- Purpose and purpose of the media publication;
- Audience and target message;
- Biases or perspectives presented;
- Strategies used to gain attention or influence opinion;
- Ethical considerations, such as credibility and accuracy.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP AND RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR

Activity: Group work and presentation

Duration: 20 minutes

Instructions: Divide participants into small groups and give them scenarios related to digital citizenship and responsible behavior on social networks. Ask each group to discuss and suggest strategies for dealing with the given scenarios in a responsible and ethical manner. After the discussion, ask each group to present their strategies to the larger group, encouraging collaborative learning and sharing of perspectives.

MEDIA AND DIGITAL LITERACY IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

Activity: Case study

Abstract: This case study examines the importance of media and digital literacy in the context of social networks, focusing on a real-life scenario involving a viral news story on a popular social media platform. The case study explores the consequences of uncritical media consumption, highlighting the importance of media literacy skills in dealing with the complexity of social networks and mitigating the spread of misinformation.

Introduction: Social networks have become influential platforms for disseminating information, shaping public opinion, and facilitating online interactions. However, the rapid spread of information and the spread of misinformation have highlighted the need for media and digital literacy when

using social networks. This case study analyzes a specific case where media literacy skills are lacking, leading to the spread of false information and its consequences.

The Case Study: In this case study, we consider a scenario involving a viral news story on a popular social media platform called “SocialLink”. The story claims that a famous celebrity made inflammatory remarks at a public event, sparking a wave of outrage and condemnation among users. The story quickly went viral on the platform, leading to widespread discussion, social media campaigns and calls for a boycott against the celebrity.

Consequences of lack of media literacy:

- ***Spread of misinformation:*** Viral news has gained popularity due to its sensational nature, which has led to its widespread distribution on the social networking platform. Users, without critically evaluating the credibility of the information, share and comment on the story, amplifying its reach and impact;
- ***Reputation Damage:*** The celebrity involved in the fake story faces serious reputational damage as a result of the social media backlash. The spread of misinformation contributed to creating a negative public perception and had potential consequences on the celebrity's career and personal life;
- ***Polarization and Online Harassment:*** The spread of misinformation fuels polarization among consumers, leading to heated debates, personal attacks, and online harassment. Users have joined different viewpoints, fueled online conflict and contributed to a toxic online environment;
- ***Off-Platform Spread of Misinformation:*** Fake news has transcended social media platform boundaries and entered mainstream networks. News outlets, without due diligence, picked up the story, spreading the misinformation to a wider audience, further amplifying its impact;

The importance of media and digital literacy:

- ***Critical evaluation of information:*** Media and digital literacy skills would enable consumers to critically evaluate news, question its source and examine supporting evidence. Such skills enable people to recognize misinformation and make informed judgments before sharing or engaging with content;

- **Source Verification:** Media literacy encourages people to verify the credibility and reliability of sources before accepting and disseminating information. Fact-checking, cross-referencing with reputable sources, and seeking multiple perspectives are essential steps in validating news stories;
- **Responsible sharing and engagement:** Media literacy skills promote responsible social media behavior by emphasizing the importance of sharing accurate information and engaging in respectful and constructive conversations. Understanding the potential impact of sharing false information helps people prevent the spread of misinformation;
- **Navigating Online Conflict:** Media literacy provides people with the tools to navigate online conflict by fostering empathy, understanding diverse perspectives, and engaging in civil discourse. These skills can help de-escalate conflicts and promote a more positive and productive online environment.

UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF MEDIA

Activity: Group discussion

Duration: 30 min

Introduction: The root of the word media is a medium - an intermediary, a provider of information. Media are television, radio, newspapers, news sites, and also blogs. Social networks (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc.) where different users create and share content can be defined as media platforms. Media content can be divided into entertainment (films, series, concerts, comedy programs, etc.) and information - one whose main task is to report and analyze current events. The second type is mostly related to the profession of journalists, whose role is to be such mediators and provide quality and verified information to their audience. Ask the participants about the differences between their definitions and the one you presented.

Instruction:

1. Start a discussion with the participants about the types of media. Tell the participants to think and give their own definition of the term media.
2. Write the different definitions on the board
3. Introduce the basic definition of media and the main functions of media you can distribute a worksheet to the participants or project it on the board.

FACTS AND OPINIONS

Activity: Group discussion

Duration: 30 min

Instruction: This module draws participants' attention to the differences between fact and opinion. A variety of exercises must be offered through which participants should be able to detect the differences between facts and opinions in various texts. In addition, the participants will get to know the different journalistic genres and their peculiarities. The training also focuses on developing the participants' skills to recognize the different types of messages they receive from the news.

Expected results:

- Participants differentiate between fact and opinion;
- Participants recognize the messages of different types of journalistic materials;
- Participants recognize fake news from real news;

Basic concepts:

- What is news? The news is "sensational information"; News is what the editor has judged; News is what people care about; News is what the powerful of the day do not want the public to know;
- What is the difference between fact and opinion? Definition of fact and opinion.
- What do we need to know about facts and opinions/ comments in the media?

WHAT IS NEWS?

News is sensational, exclusive information: exclusive information is information that the journalist has discovered or learned before anyone else. This is usually a sufficient condition for the media to broadcast such information. News is what the editor has judged. Sometimes it is the editor who decides whether a piece of information is news or not. Every day, numerous stories are discussed in the newsrooms, and therefore someone has to judge which of them are important and which are not. News is what excites people: for many people, the sources of most of the news they consume are their friends and social networks. We often get our news from Facebook or Twitter. News is information that powerful people would not want to reach the public. It often happens that journalists come across information about irregularities committed by the rulers. It is the duty of journalists to disclose this information.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FACT AND OPINION?

- **Fact:** Something that can be proven to be true;
- **Opinion:** Thoughts on a given issue, not necessarily supported by facts, but more often prompted by emotion;
- **Informed opinion:** Thoughts on a given matter by someone well-versed in facts, research, trends, or personal experience on the subject.

FACTS, OPINIONS & COMMENTS IN THE MEDIA

A fact can be thought of as something that is said to have happened or something that is assumed to be true. But everyone should check how reliable a claim is before declaring it fact. Of course, there are proven facts that are accepted by everyone, such as the fact that the Earth is round.

BASICS OF NEWS

Activity: Presentation & discussion

Duration: 15 minutes

Instruction:

1. Divide the group into 3 or 4 groups and give them the Basics of News worksheet and let them read the questions. (2 minutes)
2. Play them a recording of a newscast and let them complete the answers to the questions on the worksheet (6 minutes)
3. Assign each group to present their answers and discuss them. (7 minutes)

WORKSHEET: BASICS OF NEWS

Define the term "news" and give an example of a recent news story that made an impression on you.	
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Explain how journalism differs from news.	
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What is the difference between fact and opinion?	
--	--

The word media is associated with many things. list at least three of them.	
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Why is it important to distinguish between fact and opinion?	
--	--

Where do you get your information from?	
---	--

How are you involved in the media?	
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ANALYSIS OF COMMENTARY MATERIAL

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 15 minutes

Instruction:

1. Distribute copies of comment materials and give them time to read them. (4 minutes)
 2. Give the task to separate the facts from the opinions in the text. Use the following guiding questions: Which statements are facts? What are opinions? Can you tell the difference between them? (4 minutes)
 3. Choose participants to write on one side of the board which are the facts, and which are the opinions? (3 minutes)
 4. Discuss which statements are based on verifiable facts and which are based on opinions. (4 minutes)
-

A SHORT GLOSSARY OF JOURNALISTIC GENRES

Activity: Presentation & discussion

Duration: 15 minutes

Instruction:

1. Tell the participants to think about their definitions of news, analysis and reporting. (1 minute)
 2. Divide the participants into four teams: news, analysis, report, interview. (1 minute)
 3. Assign each team to list the main characteristics of their assigned genre and write them on a sticky note. (5 minutes)
 4. Have each team present the characteristics of their genre. (3 minutes)
Stick the notes on the board
 5. Show (project, read) the main definitions of the three genres and ask the participants how it differs from their definitions. (5 minutes)
-

FACT OR OPINION

Activity: Group work

Duration: 15 minutes

Instruction:

1. Divide the class into 4 groups. (1 minute)

2. Offer them a common topic (e.g. climate change, summer vacation, weather) and assign two of the groups to write a short news story on the topic and the other two to write a short comment/opinion. Write in advance on a piece of paper what the material they have to prepare is and give it to them without the others knowing. (8 minutes)
3. Let each group read their material, during which time the other participants write down main points according to which the written is news or opinion. (6 minutes).

CONCLUSION

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 10 minutes

Instruction: Summarize the key points discussed and emphasize the importance of critical thinking, responsible behavior and social media literacy. Provide participants with additional resources, such as fact-checking websites, media literacy guides, or online fact-checking tools. Encourage participants to apply their media literacy skills in their daily use of social networks, share their knowledge with others and be responsible digital citizens.

PROGRAM 3:

CRITICAL THINKING



PROGRAM 3: CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking in social media refers to the practice of actively and skillfully analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating information encountered on social media platforms. It includes a thorough understanding of the nature of arguments, biases, logical fallacies and how they manifest in the realm of social media. Critical thinking in social networks is essential for navigating the complex and often misleading landscape of online information, and for participating responsibly and effectively in digital discourse. Key components of this critical thinking include:

- Evaluation of sources: Determining the credibility and reliability of the source of the information or message. This includes recognizing the difference between primary and secondary sources, checking the author's qualifications, and accounting for potential bias;
- Information Verification: Cross-check information with multiple reliable sources before accepting it as true. This includes understanding how to use search engines, databases and other resources effectively;
- Recognizing biases: Recognizing that everyone has biases, including oneself, and being able to identify when they influence the interpretation of information. This also includes understanding how algorithms in social networks can create "echo chambers" or "filter bubbles" that reinforce these biases;
- Logical Analysis: Identifying logical flaws and fallacies in arguments. This includes understanding common fallacies such as ad hominem attacks, citing authority, slippery slope arguments, and more;
- Constructive participation: Interacting respectfully and thoughtfully with others, even when disagreeing. This includes the ability to present arguments clearly and effectively, listen to and consider opposing viewpoints;
- Ethical consideration: Considering the ethical implications of sharing or disseminating information and taking responsibility for one's own contribution to the digital media environment.

Using social networks to improve critical thinking

Social media has become a ubiquitous part of our daily lives, profoundly shaping the way we communicate, share information, and engage with the world. An often-overlooked potential of these platforms is their ability to improve critical

thinking skills. This is why using social media to improve critical thinking is critical:

A. Access to different perspectives: Social networks bring together users from different cultural, geographical and ideological backgrounds. This diversity of perspectives can challenge preconceptions and prejudices, stimulating critical thinking as users analyze, evaluate and compare different perspectives. Social networks are inherently a mix of people from different backgrounds, cultures and belief systems. Each user, with their unique experiences and perspectives, contributes to the vast pool of knowledge and ideas that make up the content of these platforms. Access to diverse perspectives on social media refers to the ability to engage with and learn from this diverse set of perspectives. Here's a deeper look at what those entails:

- **Opportunity to meet diversity:** Participating in a social network allows users to interact with people they may not meet in their daily lives. This can include people from different geographic locations, cultures, socioeconomic statuses, occupations, and age groups, each bringing their own unique perspective;
- **Understanding alternative points of view:** Social networks often host a variety of discussions on topics ranging from the casual to the critical. By observing or participating in these discussions, users can see how different people interpret the same issue, helping them understand alternative perspectives and realize the complexity of many topics.

Access to diverse perspectives on social media is more than information – it's about education, empathy, and personal growth. By embracing this diversity of thought, users can deepen their understanding, expand their worldview, and improve their critical thinking skills.

B. Evaluating information: With the abundance of information available on social media, users must regularly evaluate the credibility and reliability of sources. This constant need to distinguish fact from misinformation or opinion can help hone critical thinking skills by encouraging a more discerning approach to information consumption. The evaluation of information on social networks involves a series of steps designed to establish the credibility, reliability and accuracy of the content:

- **Source verification:** The first step in evaluating information is to verify the source. Who posted the information? Is it an authoritative news outlet, a recognized expert, a public figure, or an unknown person?

Checking the credibility of the source can often give an initial idea of the reliability of the information;

- **Cross-referencing:** Cross-referencing involves checking the given information against other sources. If the information is accurate, it is likely to be reported consistently across multiple reliable sources. Cross-referencing can also help identify whether information is out of context or misleading;
- **Fact-checking:** There are numerous fact-checking websites that verify the truth of news and claims spread online. They can be invaluable tools in the evaluation process;
- **Analyzing bias:** Every source of information has some form of bias. Recognizing this bias and understanding how it may affect the presentation of information is an important part of evaluating information;
- **Assess timeliness:** The date of information is also crucial, especially for news or statistics. Outdated information may no longer be accurate or relevant;
- **Quality assessment:** Finally, the quality of the information must be assessed. This includes looking at the professionalism of the presentation, the use of language, the logic and consistency of the argument, and any supporting evidence provided.

Evaluating social media information is a vital skill in the digital age. It includes a systematic approach to source verification, detail matching, fact-checking, bias identification, currency checking, and overall content quality assessment. By practicing this skill, users can ensure that they consume and share content responsibly, contributing to a more trustworthy and truthful online environment.

C. Discussions and Debates: Social networks offer numerous opportunities for discussions and debates, whether through comment sections, forums or special discussion groups. Participating in these discussions requires users to formulate arguments, consider counterarguments, and rethink their views, all of which are exercises in critical thinking. While discussions and debates on social media can provide valuable learning experiences and exposure to different perspectives, they can also pose certain risks for young people. These risks can range from exposure to harmful content to emotional distress. Here are some potential problems:

- **Exposure to inappropriate or harmful content:** Sometimes online discussions can delve into topics that are inappropriate or harmful to young people. They may be exposed to graphic content, hate speech or harmful ideologies without sufficient context or guidance to process this information appropriately;
- **Cyberbullying:** Debates on social networks can often become heated, leading to aggressive behavior and cyberbullying. Young people can find themselves the target of personal attacks, bullying or trolling, which can have severe consequences for their mental and emotional health;
- **Echo chambers and polarization:** Social network algorithms often create "echo chambers" by showing users content that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs. This can lead to young people only participating in discussions that support their views, leading to polarization and a lack of understanding or tolerance of different viewpoints;
- **Misinformation and propaganda:** Not all information shared in online discussions and debates is accurate. Young people can be exposed to or even spread misinformation, conspiracy theories or propaganda, which can distort their understanding of important issues;
- **Emotional stress:** Participating in debates on controversial issues can be emotionally taxing. Young people may experience stress, anxiety or other forms of distress, especially if discussions involve personal attacks or heated argument;
- **Privacy Risks:** In the heat of discussion, young people may share personal information for others to abuse. This can range from revealing their location to sharing personal views that could be used against them in the future.

Although discussions and debates on social networks offer opportunities for learning, they also carry certain risks. It is critical that young people are guided how to navigate these spaces safely, respectfully and critically, helping them to reap the benefits while minimizing the potential harms.

D. Understanding Media Influence: Social networks are powerful tools for marketing, political campaigns, and social movements. By analyzing how these messages are created and disseminated, users can better understand the mechanisms of influence and persuasion in digital media. This understanding can improve critical thinking and encourage more informed content consumption. Social networks are a major source of entertainment, information and social interaction for young people. Media content on these social networks—from

news articles and blog posts to videos and memes—has a significant impact on young people. Understanding this influence is important for a number of reasons:

- ***Shaping perceptions and attitudes:*** Media content can shape young people's perceptions and attitudes about the world - from their views on social and political issues to their beliefs about beauty, success and happiness. Understanding this influence can help young people critically analyze media messages and form their own informed views;
- ***Influence on behavior:*** Media content can also influence the behavior of young people - from viral challenges to celebrity endorsements. By understanding these influences, youth can make more informed decisions about their actions, avoid potentially harmful trends, and make choices that align with their values and well-being;
- ***Impact on self-esteem and mental health:*** Media portrayals of idealized bodies, lifestyles and success can affect young people's self-esteem and mental health. Understanding this influence can help youth recognize unrealistic media standards and foster a healthier relationship with themselves and their bodies;
- ***Developing media literacy skills:*** Understanding media influence is a key aspect of media literacy that is critical to navigating today's information-rich environment. Media literacy skills can help young people recognize credible information, understand how media messages are created and directed, and use media in a responsible and useful way;
- ***Promoting responsible digital citizenship:*** By understanding the influence of media, young people can become more responsible digital citizens aware of their consumption and sharing of media content. They can contribute to a more positive and respectful online culture, be it by sharing reliable information, promoting positive messages or opposing online bullying and hate speech.

Understanding the influence of media on youth on social networks is critical in our digital age. It gives young people the knowledge and skills to navigate the digital world safely and thoughtfully, encouraging critical thinking, informed decision-making and responsible digital citizenship.

E. Algorithm-wise and echo chambers: Social networks use sophisticated algorithms to determine what content users see. Understanding these algorithms and their impact on our online experience encourages critical thinking about the intersection of technology, personal behavior and social

influence. As we move through cyberspace, understanding the role of algorithms and the formation of "echo chambers" in social networks is critical, especially for young people. That's why:

- **Personalized online experience:** Social network algorithms determine what content appears in users' feeds, providing a personalized online experience. Young people need to understand this in order to recognize why they see certain posts, ads and recommendations. "Personalized online experience" is a term that describes how digital platforms, especially social networks, adapt the content that users see based on their unique behaviors, preferences and interactions. Algorithms and echo chambers play an important role in this personalization process;
- **Role of algorithms:** Algorithms are complex computational procedures that social networks use to analyze data and user behavior. This can include what posts you like or share, the people you interact with most, the type of content you typically engage with, and much more. Based on this data, algorithms predict what content you're likely to be interested in and prioritize showing you that content in your feed. That's why your feed (media channel) is unique to you - it's personalized based on your online behavior;
- **Creating echo chambers:** Echo chambers are a side effect of this personalization process. Because algorithms are designed to show you content, you're likely to agree with or like, you end up mostly seeing posts that align with your existing beliefs, interests, or preferences. This creates an "echo chamber" in which your views are constantly reinforced without the opportunity to get to know different points of view;
- **Impact on user experience:** A personalized online experience can have both positive and negative impacts. On the plus side, it ensures that users see relevant and engaging content, making their time on the platform more enjoyable and efficient. The negative side, however, can lead to a narrow and biased understanding of the world, limit exposure to different points of view, and even contribute to the spread of misinformation or "fake news";
- **User control:** It is important to note that users have some control over their personalized online experience. They can choose to follow or unfollow certain accounts, like or dislike posts, and adjust their privacy settings. Some platforms also allow users to "break up" their echo chamber by exploring different categories of content or using features designed to show different points of view.

The personalized online experience in terms of algorithms and echo chambers refers to the tailored content that users see on their social media channels. While this can improve the user experience by providing relevant content, it also has the potential to limit exposure to different views and ideas, emphasizing the need for critical media literacy skills.

F. Filter Bubble Awareness: Algorithms can create "filter bubbles" where users only see content that matches their interests and views. Understanding this can help young people realize that their online experience is tailored to them and may not reflect the full diversity of perspectives available. In the context of social networks, "filter bubbles" is a term that refers to the intellectual isolation that can occur when algorithms selectively present information to users based on their preferences and behavior. Being aware of social media "filter bubbles" involves understanding the existence, causes and effects of these bubbles:

- ***Recognizing the personalized experience:*** Being aware of filter bubbles means recognizing that social media platforms use algorithms to personalize your online experience. They analyze your past behavior—for example, the pages you follow, the posts you like, and the content you share—to predict what you'll want to see and engage with in the future;
- ***Understanding selective exposure:*** Being aware of filter bubbles also includes understanding that these algorithms can limit your exposure to different viewpoints and information. You may see mostly content that matches your beliefs and interests, reinforcing your existing views while filtering out contrasting ideas;
- ***Awareness of intellectual isolation:*** Awareness of the risk of intellectual isolation is another aspect of filter bubble awareness. Over time, constant exposure to content that reinforces your existing opinions can lead to a narrow worldview, reducing your ability to understand and empathize with viewpoints different from your own;
- ***Critical perception of information:*** Awareness of "filter bubbles" helps develop critical thinking and media literacy. It encourages you to question the information you see on social media, look for different sources and critically evaluate the content before accepting it as true;
- ***Active intervention:*** Awareness of filter bubbles implies an understanding that users can intervene to "burst" these bubbles. This may include knowingly following accounts or researching topics that offer different points of view, adjusting privacy settings, or using third-party tools designed to expose users to different points of view.

Understanding social media "filter bubbles" involves understanding the personalization processes of social media and their potential to limit intellectual diversity. It promotes a more critical and conscious approach to the use of social media by encouraging users to seek out different perspectives and think critically about the information they consume.

G. Echo chambers and polarization: Like filter bubbles, algorithms can also lead to the creation of echo chambers where users interact primarily with like-minded people. This could exacerbate social and political polarization. Realizing this can encourage young people to seek out different perspectives and engage in constructive dialogues. Echo chambers and polarization are two interrelated phenomena that are becoming more visible with the development of social networks:

- ***Echo chambers:*** An "echo chamber" refers to a situation where certain ideas, beliefs, or data are amplified or reinforced by repetition within a particular system, such as a social network. In this context, it is when people are exposed to mostly information that is consistent with their existing views and almost none that contradicts them. This happens because social networks' algorithms are designed to show users content they are likely to agree with or like based on their past behavior. As a result, users often find themselves in a cycle where their views are constantly reinforced by the content they see, creating an "echo chamber";
- ***Polarization:*** Polarization refers to the division of groups into opposing factions with little or no middle ground. In social networks, this occurs when users are exposed primarily to content that aligns with their existing beliefs (due to the echo chamber effect), while being isolated from opposing viewpoints. Over time, this lack of exposure to different viewpoints can cause users' views to become more extreme, leading to greater division between different groups. This division can manifest itself in many ways, from political and ideological polarization to division based on cultural, racial or religious differences.

Echo chambers and polarization in social media describe a scenario where users are exposed primarily to content that aligns with their beliefs, leading to entrenchment of those beliefs, lack of exposure to different viewpoints, and over time to greater division between groups with different views. This is a phenomenon that highlights the need for consumers to consciously seek out

different perspectives and think critically about the information they consume online.

H. Critical Thinking and Media Literacy: Understanding algorithms and echo chambers is key to developing critical thinking and media literacy skills. It encourages young people to question the information they encounter online, fact-check and think critically about different sources of information. Social networks use complex algorithms to curate content for their users, thus inadvertently creating so-called "echo chambers". These elements have a significant impact on young people's critical thinking and media literacy skills:

- ***Distorted perception of reality:*** When young people are constantly exposed to content that matches their existing beliefs and interests (due to the echo chamber effect), they can develop a distorted perception of reality. This can lead to an oversimplified understanding of complex issues and reduce their ability to critically engage with different perspectives;
- ***Confirmation bias:*** Echo chambers can increase confirmation bias - the tendency to interpret new information as confirmation of existing beliefs or theories. This can hinder young people's critical thinking skills, making them less likely to question or challenge information that is consistent with their existing beliefs;
- ***Lack of media literacy:*** When content is algorithmically selected to match a user's interests, young people may not be aware of the selective nature of the information they consume. This can lead to a lack of media literacy, making it difficult to discern the credibility and reliability of sources;
- ***Polarization of opinions:*** Algorithms and echo chambers can lead to polarization where young people's views become more extreme due to lack of exposure to opposing viewpoints. This polarization can inhibit nuanced, critical thinking about controversial topics;
- ***Misinformation and fake news:*** Algorithms sometimes prioritize engaging content over factual accuracy, which can contribute to the spread of misinformation or fake news. If young people lack the critical thinking and media literacy skills to recognize these inaccuracies, they can easily accept and spread false information.

However, being aware of these challenges can turn them into valuable learning opportunities. By understanding how algorithms and echo chambers work, young people can be encouraged to seek out different perspectives, challenge their preconceptions and assess the credibility of online information. This can

significantly improve their critical thinking skills and media literacy - abilities that are crucial to navigating the digital age effectively and responsibly.

I. Privacy and data protection: Algorithms work by analyzing user data, including their browsing history, likes, comments and shares. Understanding this can increase young people's awareness of the importance of protecting their personal data and making informed decisions about privacy settings.

J. Informed use of social networks: Understanding how algorithms work can help young people use social networks more effectively, whether they're looking for reliable information, different points of view or interesting content. It can help them customize their online experience to better suit their needs and interests.

Understanding social media algorithms and echo chambers is critical for young people. It equips them with the knowledge to effectively navigate the digital landscape, promotes critical thinking and media literacy, and promotes informed and responsible use of social media.

K. Ethical and solidarity engagement: Critical thinking in social networks is not only about evaluating information, but also about ethical and empathetic engagement with others. It includes considering the potential impact of posts or comments, recognizing and respecting the diversity of the online community, and navigating online disagreements with maturity and respect. In the last few decades, the world has undergone a significant transformation, especially with the advent of digital technology and social media. As a result, traditional forms of communication have evolved and become more dynamic, fostering the interconnectedness of humanity in ways previously unthinkable. This change has opened up new opportunities for ethical and solidarity-based participation in social networks. Ethical engagement in social networks refers to the responsible and respectful behavior of individuals and groups in digital spaces. This includes respecting the rights and privacy of others, sharing accurate information, promoting inclusion and diversity, and refraining from harmful behavior such as cyberbullying, spreading fake news, or misusing personal data. The ethical commitment also extends to social media companies, where it calls for providing a safe, open and fair platform for all users. Solidarity commitment, on the other hand, refers to the collective actions taken by networked individuals in support of common causes or goals. In the context of social networks, this can range from online campaigns in support of social justice issues, disaster response initiatives, fundraising for marginalized communities to global movements to combat

climate change. Solidarity in social media embodies the power of collective voice and action.

When ethical and solidarity engagement intersect in social networks, they create a powerful force for positive change. They allow the collective voice of the network to be used to advocate for issues that matter, such as equality, environmental sustainability and human rights, while maintaining a commitment to ethics. Ethical and solidarity engagement in social networks has played a significant role in recent years. For example, we have seen how social networks are used to shine a light on social injustice, to mobilize resources for disaster relief or to mobilize support for climate action. These movements highlighted the transformative power of digital solidarity when used ethically.

However, ethical and solidarity-based participation in social networks is also associated with challenges. The same platforms that amplify voices for good can also be used for misinformation, hate speech and online harassment. This requires continuous efforts by all stakeholders - both individuals, communities and platforms - to promote ethical standards, monitor their implementation and take action against violations. Ethical and solidarity-based social media engagement has the potential to create significant positive change in the world. It symbolizes the intersection of technology and social responsibility, providing opportunities for individuals and communities to come together to achieve common goals while upholding the values of respect, integrity and justice. It is a call to all of us to be conscious digital citizens who use social networks not only for personal communication but also as tools for social benefit.

If used correctly, social networks have significant potential to contribute to improving critical thinking skills. The abundance of information available on these platforms provides users with opportunities to engage in analyzing, evaluating and forming judgments about different viewpoints, ideas and news.

Social networks, because of their global nature, expose users to a diversity of viewpoints, encouraging them to step outside their echo chambers and engage with opposing opinions. This diverse exposure helps sharpen critical thinking by challenging pre-existing beliefs, broadening perspectives and encouraging people to form their own informed opinions.

Moreover, the reality of misinformation and "fake news" spread on these platforms further emphasizes the need for critical thinking. This situation indirectly encourages users to develop question-based thinking, verify the credibility of sources, and distinguish fact from opinion, all of which are integral to critical thinking.

Online discussions and debates in social networks can stimulate cognitive processing. They provide users with a platform to formulate their arguments, engage in reasoned dialogue, challenge misstatements and consider feedback, further enhancing their critical thinking abilities. However, this potential is not automatically realized through the use of social networks alone. It requires a focused effort in education and digital literacy to develop these skills among users. This requires actively fostering an online culture that values reasoned debate, respectful disagreement and evidence-based discussion. Therefore, although social networks can present challenges, they also offer unique opportunities to foster critical thinking. As digital citizens, we must harness this potential to facilitate more informed, thoughtful and constructive discussions in our interconnected world. As we navigate the vast sea of information on social media, the beacon of critical thinking will guide us in distinguishing truth from falsehood and in making informed judgments and decisions. In summary, if used effectively, social networks can serve as powerful platforms for enhancing critical thinking skills. They provide an interactive, real-time environment where users can evaluate information, engage with diverse viewpoints, understand media influence, and practice ethical behavior online. Thus, using social networks to enhance critical thinking is an extremely important endeavor in our increasingly connected and digital world.

Teaching young people critical awareness on social media is of utmost importance. Here are some compelling reasons why it is important that young people acquire critical thinking skills in their online interactions:

- **Assessing the credibility of information:** Social networks are flooded with information, making it challenging for young people to distinguish between reliable and misleading content. Teaching critical thinking allows them to assess the credibility of sources, evaluate evidence, and make informed judgments about the information they encounter. This skill is vital to navigating the vast sea of information and avoiding the pitfalls of misinformation and fake news;
- **Develop media literacy:** Critical thinking in social networks goes hand in hand with media literacy. By teaching young people to critically analyze media messages, they become aware of the biases, manipulative tactics and persuasive techniques used in online content. They learn to question the intent behind the messages they encounter and recognize the potential impact on their own opinions and behavior;
- **Nurturing independent thought:** Critical thinking promotes independence of thought and encourages young people to form their own perspectives rather

than blindly accepting the information presented to them. This enables them to challenge assumptions, engage in reasoned debate and think critically about complex social and political issues. By developing these skills, young people become active participants in shaping their own beliefs and contributing to valuable discussions;

- **Resistance to manipulation and online threats:** Social networks are not immune to manipulative tactics, fraud and online threats. Teaching critical thinking enables young people to recognize red flags, spot potential dangers and avoid falling victim to malicious activities such as phishing, cyberbullying or identity theft. They are becoming better equipped to protect themselves and their personal information in the digital realm;
- **Fostering respectful dialogue:** Critical thinking promotes open-mindedness, empathy and respectful dialogue in social networks. Young people learn to engage with different points of view, understand different points of view and express their opinions in a constructive way. This skill is critical to fostering healthy and inclusive online communities where people can engage in meaningful conversations and learn from each other;
- **Maintaining digital citizenship:** Critical thinking is a cornerstone of responsible digital citizenship. By teaching young people to critically evaluate information and engage thoughtfully on social media, we empower them to be responsible and ethical digital citizens. They learn about their rights and responsibilities, respect for privacy and intellectual property, and the importance of constructive online behavior;
- **Preparing for the future:** Critical thinking is a valuable skill that goes beyond social networks and has lifelong applications. It gives young people the ability to analyze problems, consider multiple perspectives and make informed decisions. These skills are vital to academic success, professional growth, and active citizenship in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

Teaching young people to think critically on social networks is essential to their development as informed and responsible digital citizens. By fostering critical thinking skills, we empower them to evaluate information, resist manipulation, engage in respectful dialogue and make informed decisions. These skills are critical to their personal growth, well-being and success in the digital age.

Critical consciousness in social networks is crucial to creating more just, inclusive and democratic digital spaces. It allows users to navigate these platforms with an awareness of the wider societal implications of their actions and to use these platforms to challenge and change oppressive structures. Social media critical awareness refers to the ability to recognize, analyze and challenge the power

structures, inequalities and ideologies embedded in digital platforms for social interaction. This includes a thorough understanding of how social, political and cultural contexts shape the production and dissemination of information and the formation of online communities. Key aspects of this critical awareness include:

- **Recognizing power dynamics:** Identifying how power dynamics and hierarchies operate within social networks, such as how certain voices may be privileged over others or how algorithms may prioritize certain types of content.
- **Ideology analysis:** Analyzing the underlying values, beliefs and assumptions that guide the functioning and use of social networks. This includes understanding how these ideologies can shape one's own and others' perceptions and behavior.
- **Structural analysis:** Examining the structures of social networks and how they can reinforce or challenge societal norms and inequalities. This includes understanding the role of algorithms, data collection and privacy policies.
- **Advocacy and action:** Using social networks as tools for social change. This includes not only recognizing and understanding injustices, but also taking action to challenge and change them.
- **Self-reflection:** Reflection on one's position in social networks, including the privileges and prejudices one brings to these spaces. It also involves recognizing how one's own behavior can contribute to or challenge existing power structures.
- **Media literacy:** Applying media literacy skills to responsibly and critically evaluate and create social media content.

Teaching young people critical awareness in social networks is of paramount importance. The reasons why it is critical that young people are trained in critical thinking skills in their online interactions:

- **Recognizing manipulation and fraud:** Social networks are full of fraudulent practices, including disinformation, luring banners for manipulative advertising. Teaching critical awareness helps young people develop habits that enable them to recognize and be critical. They become less susceptible to manipulation and are more likely to make informed decisions based on accurate information.
- **Understanding media influence:** Social networks have become powerful platforms for media distribution, shaping public opinion and influencing behavior. By having a critical mind, young people learn to identify and

analyze the underlying messages, biases and persuasive techniques used in online content. This understanding enables them to navigate the media landscape and make informed choices about the information they consume and share more effectively.

- **Promoting digital wellbeing:** social media can impact young people's mental health and self-esteem. Critical awareness allows them to critically evaluate the idealized images, the culture of comparison and the negative influences prevalent in social networks. They learn to tell the difference between reality and carefully selected online users, fostering a healthier relationship with social networks and maintaining their own self-esteem.
- **Promoting ethical online behavior:** Critical awareness includes ethical considerations. Educating young people about the ethical implications of their online actions helps them develop a sense of responsibility, empathy and respect for others. They are more aware of the consequences of their online behavior, fostering a positive and inclusive digital environment.
- **Promoting responsible digital citizenship:** Critical awareness is an element of responsible digital citizenship. By teaching young people to question, analyze and verify information, they become active participants in online communities. They learn to engage in respectful and informed discussions, promote digital literacy and combat misinformation, thus promoting responsible and active digital citizenship.
- **Strengthening personal agency:** Critical awareness empowers young people to take control of their online experiences. By encouraging them to question narratives, challenge assumptions and seek multiple perspectives, they become more confident in expressing their opinions and making independent decisions. They develop a sense of agency that allows them to actively shape their online interactions and contribute meaningfully to public conversations.

Teaching young people critical social media awareness is essential for their personal growth, digital well-being and responsible engagement in the online world. By nurturing critical awareness skills, we empower them to recognize manipulation, understand the influence of networks, promote ethical behavior, promote responsible digital citizenship, strengthen personal agency, and navigate the complexities of the digital age with confidence and sustainability.



PROGRAM 3: CRITICAL THINKING

TRAINING METHODS AND ACTIONS

The objective of this training program is to improve participants' critical awareness and thinking skills in the context of social networks. The program aims to develop their ability to evaluate information, recognize bias and engage in reasoned discussions.

Required materials:

- Projector or display;
- Social media posts or articles;
- Writing materials (pens/ pencils);
- Flipchart or whiteboard with markers.

INTRODUCTION

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 10 minutes

Instructions: Discuss the importance of critical thinking in social media, emphasizing the need to evaluate information, recognize biases, and engage in thoughtful discussions.

FUNDAMENTALS OF CRITICAL THINKING

Activity: Presentation

Duration: 20 minutes

Instructions: Use a projector or display to present key concepts related to critical thinking, such as evaluating information, recognizing bias, logical reasoning, and evidence-based analysis. Give examples that illustrate these concepts in the context of social networks.

ANALYZING SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 30 minutes

Instructions: Distribute brochures containing different social media posts or articles from different platforms. In small groups, ask participants to critically evaluate each publication or article using predetermined criteria, such as accuracy, credibility, source verification, and potential bias. Encourage participants to discuss their ratings and the reasoning behind their ratings. Hold a group discussion, asking each group to share their assessments and reflections, encouraging collaborative learning and the exchange of perspectives.

RECOGNIZING BIAS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Activity: Teamwork and presentation

Duration: 20 minutes

Instructions: Divide the participants into small groups and give them scenarios representing various social and political issues. Ask each group to discuss and identify potential biases that may be present in the way these issues are portrayed on social media. After the discussion, ask each group to present their findings to the larger group, allowing for further analysis and discussion of biases.

CONSTRUCTIVE ONLINE DISCUSSIONS IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

Activity: A case study

Duration: 20 minutes

Abstract: This case study explores the importance of engaging in constructive online discussions in social networks by focusing on a real-life scenario involving a controversial topic on a popular social media platform. The case study highlights the benefits of respectful engagement, evidence-based arguments, and active listening in fostering productive conversations and creating a positive online environment. Constructive participation leads to expanding knowledge, building bridges, positive influence and improved understanding. By fostering a culture of constructive engagement, social networks can become spaces for meaningful dialogue and collective problem-solving.

Introduction: Social networks provide platforms for people to share their views, engage in discussions and connect with others. However, online discussions can quickly turn into hostile exchanges and personal attacks. This case study examines a scenario where constructive participation in an online discussion positively influenced the overall discourse and led to a meaningful exchange of ideas. In this case study, we explore a scenario in a social network called "Connect World". The discussion is about an environmental issue related to the construction of a new industrial complex. Emotions ran high as users expressed differing opinions and engaged in passionate debates.

Constructive participation in online discussions includes:

- **active listening and empathy:** One user, Sarah, actively listened to the arguments presented by other participants and demonstrated empathy by acknowledging their concerns and perspectives. This approach helped create a foundation of respect and understanding.
- **arguments based on research and evidence:** Sarah carefully researched and gathered credible information to support her points of view. She

presented evidence-based arguments, including research, expert opinion and data, to support her claims. This approach added credibility to her statements and encouraged others to engage with facts instead of relying solely on emotion.

- **respectful language and tone:** Sarah expressed her thoughts using respectful language and a considerate tone. She avoids personal attacks or derogatory language, promoting a positive atmosphere for discussion. This approach encouraged others to respond in a similarly respectful manner, encouraging a productive exchange of ideas.
- **looking for common ground:** Sarah actively looked for areas of agreement with other participants, even if their opinions differed. By highlighting shared values or goals, it builds bridges between different perspectives, fostering a sense of unity and cooperation.
- **openness to new perspectives:** Sarah remained open to new ideas and perspectives. When presented with compelling arguments or evidence contrary to her original position, she acknowledged and considered alternative viewpoints. This willingness to adapt one's position when warranted demonstrated intellectual honesty and contributed to constructive discussion.

Benefits of constructive participation:

- **Expanding knowledge:** Through constructive participation, Sarah and the other participants had the opportunity to learn from each other. They gained insight into different perspectives, expanded their understanding of the problem, and looked at new angles they might not have considered before.
- **Bridge building:** Constructive participation helped bridge gaps between opposing viewpoints. By respectfully engaging and seeking common ground, Sarah and others-built bonds and fostered a sense of unity despite their initial differences. This bridging of divides contributes to a more inclusive and understanding online community.
- **Positive influence:** Sarah's constructive approach influenced the behavior of other participants, setting a precedent for respectful engagement. This helped change the general tone of the discussion from hostility to a more constructive and open-minded environment.
- **Improved understanding:** Constructive participation encouraged participants to engage in deeper reflection, critical thinking and analysis of the issue at hand. By presenting evidence-based arguments and hearing different perspectives, they gained a more nuanced understanding of the topic and the complexities surrounding it.

MEDIA PYRAMID: WHAT MEDIA DO YOU CONSUME?

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 25 minutes

Instruction: Show the media pyramid and ask participants to make their own “media diaries” - a list of media they follow and how much time they spend viewing them (10 minutes). The diagram below presents a recommended media diet with the approximate doses of information coming from various sources that are good to consume:

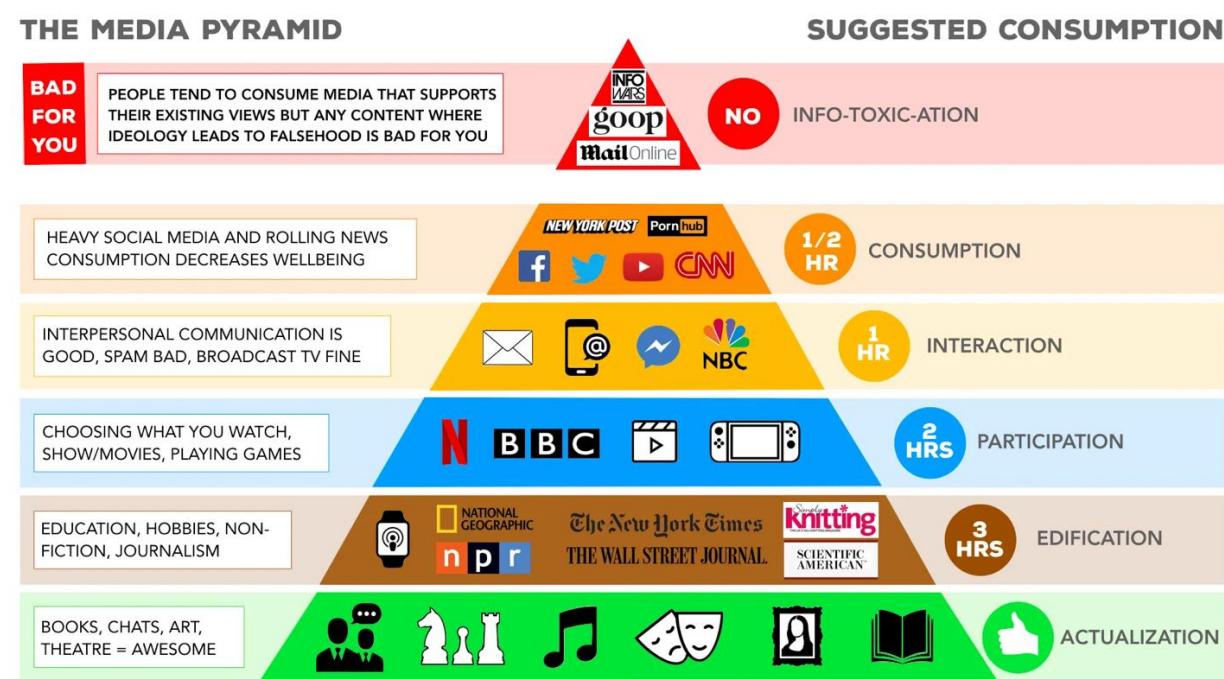


Figure 13. The media pyramid⁷⁹

A. Start a group discussion in which participants discuss their media consumption on the following questions:

1. What is the media they spend the most time on?
2. What is the main source from which they are informed?
3. Is there a type of media that no one in the class is using?

B. Elicit the main trends in their media consumption as a class (10 minutes);

C. Pay attention to the information bubbles that each participant creates for themselves - the closed information spaces of favorite media or sources of information. Discuss how everyone can get out of them – finding new sources of information, exploring established media that don't fall into a student's traditional spectrum (5 minutes).

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT: MEDIA DIET

Activity: Pair work

Duration: 10 minutes

Instruction: Your media diet is the sum total of all the information you consume. Most people are addicted to social networks, TV shows and movies. However, it is important that each of us choose more carefully what information we consume and how often.

- Introduce participants to the concept of a "media diet". Present a "healthy" media diet using the graphic (2 minutes);
- Divide the participants into pairs. Have one person tell the other about their media diet and the other person comment on it and give suggestions on how to make it healthier (8 minutes).

IN THE WORLD OF POST-TRUTH

Activity: Group work

Duration: 15 minutes

Instruction:

- Introduce the basic concepts of disinformation and post-truth (3 min);
- Introduce the topic of the anti-vax movement (3 min);
- Divide the participants into three groups.

The first group to discuss the consequences that can be caused by the spread of false information about vaccines (increase in the number of unvaccinated children in kindergartens, distrust in the health care system, mothers' protests, etc.).

The second group to discuss the channels through which fake news on the topic is spread (parenting forums, social media groups, TV shows, etc.).

The third group to discuss what are the risks to society and how some politicians exploit the created situation of mistrust in the institutions due to the spread of fake news and post-truth.

Discuss with participants how one can tell if a topic such as "anti-vaxxing" has become "contagious" and what their role is in preventing it from spreading further (10 min).

IDENTITY THEFT

Activity: Real life case study

Duration: 15 minutes

Instruction: Someone steals Californian Nicole Ortiz's photo, and her name, from her personal Facebook profile. The "identity thief" used her photo to advertise a home for rent in a local newspaper. The ad was proven to be false. As a result, the police put Nicole on a wanted list. Fortunately, though, the truth comes out and Nicole is not sent to court for a fraud she did not commit.

Steps:

- Distribute printed copies of the identity theft case study to participants.
- Divide them into three groups and give them roles:

The first group plays the role of the thief, discussing what abuses they might commit with the stolen data.

The second group plays the role of the victim, discussing how she feels and what the consequences of the theft are for her.

The third group plays the role of advisors, giving recommendations to prevent theft of personal data on social media (10 minutes).

Each group shares what they have come to. Summarize Group 3's recommendations and ask participants which advice they found most valuable. (5 minutes).

WHAT DOES SOCIAL MEDIA KNOW ABOUT YOU?

Activity: Pair work and discussion

Duration: 15 minutes

Instruction: Ask the questions: (2 minutes)

- How many of you have a social media profile?
- How many of you actively share information from your daily life?

Hand out handouts or show the infographic on a projector: (2 minutes)

Ask the participants to discuss in pairs the relationship between their behavior on social networks and their personal data and right to privacy. (6 minutes)

Ask them the following guiding questions: (5 minutes)

- Do you think twice before sharing your personal information on social media?
- Do your parents share pictures of you on social media?
- Does this bother you?
- Do you feel threatened or annoyed when your friends or relatives tag you in photos without your consent?

- How would your life change if social media disappeared?

Discuss with the participants to what extent their media consumption is or is not a threat to their privacy Show them the remaining three graphs:

- How much of your information is online?
- Data collection goes beyond public profiles
- How do we protect our profiles?
- What do social networks know about you?
- Does the information you share on social and public platforms put you at risk? How much of your information is online?

Worksheet: TYPES OF SHARED INFORMATION

Basic information	Technical information
Name	Data from other related websites
Date of birth	Browser
Language, Time zone	Model phone
Phone number	Previous and current jobs
Current and past jobs	Mobile operator
e-mail address	Hardware settings
Education	Internet provider
Address	Geolocation

ESSENTIALS OF CRITICAL MINDFULNESS

Activity: Presentation

Duration: 20 minutes

Instruction: Use a projector or display to present key concepts related to critical mindfulness, such as recognizing manipulation, media literacy, ethical considerations, and responsible digital citizenship. Give examples that illustrate these concepts in the context of social networks (10 min). Discuss the importance of critical awareness in social media, emphasizing the need to question, analyze and evaluate information encountered online (10 min).

ANALYZING SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 30 minutes

Instruction: Hand out brochures or worksheets containing different social media posts or articles from different platforms. In small groups, ask participants to critically evaluate each publication or article, considering factors such as credibility, bias, reliability of sources, and potential manipulation techniques. Encourage participants to discuss their ratings and the reasoning behind their ratings. Create a discussion by asking each group to share their assessments, encouraging collaborative learning and the exchange of perspectives.

PROMOTING ETHICAL ONLINE BEHAVIOR

Activity: Group work

Duration: 20 minutes

Instruction:

1. Divide participants into small groups and provide them with scenarios related to ethical considerations in social networks (e.g., sharing personal information, engaging in cyberbullying or spreading misinformation).
 2. Ask each group to discuss and suggest strategies for responding to these scenarios in an ethical and responsible manner.
 3. After the discussion, ask each group to present their strategies to the larger group, allowing for further analysis and discussion of ethical online behavior.
-

RECOGNIZING MANIPULATION TECHNIQUES

Activity: Case study

Duration: 20 minutes

Instruction: Imagine a fictional social networking platform called “SociaLink” that has millions of active users. The platform offers various features such as sharing posts, commenting, liking and direct messaging. Users can join public groups based on their interests or create private groups for specific communities. SociaLink has become a breeding ground for manipulation and disinformation campaigns.

Case Study Participant: The case study focuses on a user named Alex, a young professional who uses SociaLink for personal and professional networking. Alex frequently engages with posts, joins groups related to hobbies and interests, and connects with like-minded people.

Manipulation techniques common in social networks:

- Misinformation and disinformation. Manipulators take advantage of the easy sharing of information on social networks to spread false or misleading information. They may create fake news articles, fabricate quotes, or selectively present facts to mislead consumers and shape public opinion.
- Emotional manipulation. Manipulators often evoke strong emotional responses by using persuasive language, evoking fear, anger, or empathy. Emotional manipulation can cloud judgement, making consumers more susceptible to false claims and biased narratives.
- Fake accounts and impersonation. Manipulators may create fake accounts or pose as reputable individuals to gain trust and credibility. By impersonating real users or influencers, they can easily spread misinformation, sway public opinion, or even engage in identity theft.
- Astroturfing and boosting. Astroturfing refers to the practice of creating an artificial mass movement or consensus by using coordinated social media accounts to amplify a particular message. Manipulators can use bots or paid trolls to inflate the popularity of a particular idea or campaign, making it appear more credible and widespread than it actually is.
- Psychological manipulation. Manipulators use cognitive biases and psychological vulnerabilities to influence consumer behavior. Techniques such as confirmation bias, social proof, scarcity tactics, and authority manipulation are commonly used to manipulate users' opinions, beliefs, and actions.
- Recognition of manipulation techniques. Source check. Users should critically assess the credibility of information sources. Checking the author, checking for multiple sources, and researching the reputation of the publication or website can help identify potential misinformation.
- Fact checking. Comparing information with trusted fact-checking organizations can help consumers verify the accuracy of claims. Fact checkers evaluate claims based on evidence, providing consumers with reliable information to counter false narratives.
- Analyzing emotional triggers. Users should be aware of content intended to evoke strong emotions. Taking a step back to analyze the emotional impact of a post can help identify potential attempts at manipulation. Fact-based and rational discussions are less likely to rely on emotional manipulation.

- View user accounts. Checking user accounts for suspicious activity, such as recently created accounts with limited activity or unusual posting patterns, can indicate potentially manipulative behavior. Users with a small number of friends, no personal information, or a large number of total followers should be approached with caution.
- Critical thinking and media literacy. Fostering critical thinking skills and media literacy is essential to recognizing manipulation techniques. Users should be encouraged to question information, seek multiple perspectives, and analyze content before accepting it as truth.

Combating manipulation: SociaLink, as a responsible social networking platform, must take proactive measures to combat manipulation techniques:

- Algorithmic detection. Implementing robust algorithms to detect and flag suspicious accounts, patterns of manipulation, and coordinated campaigns can help identify and remove manipulative content from the platform.
- Consumer education and awareness. SociaLink should invest in user education programs to raise awareness of manipulation techniques, provide guidance on critical thinking, and encourage responsible information sharing.
- Integration with fact checking. Integrating fact-checking services within SociaLink can enable users to easily access reliable information and counter false claims directly on the platform.
- Reporting and moderation tools. Developing user-friendly reporting tools and effective moderation processes can enable users to report suspicious activity or content, allowing SociaLink to take swift action against abusers.

Recognizing manipulation techniques in social networks is crucial for users to protect themselves from the spread of misinformation and psychological manipulation. By learning about common manipulation techniques, users can use critical thinking and media literacy skills to identify and combat manipulation attempts. In addition, social networking platforms such as SociaLink are responsible for implementing measures to detect and mitigate manipulation, promote user education, and promote a safer and more trustworthy digital environment.

Conclusion (10 minutes): Summarize the key points discussed during the exercise program. Emphasize the importance of critical social media awareness, promoting ethical behavior and responsible digital citizenship. Provide participants with additional resources, such as fact-checking websites, media

literacy guides, or online safety guides. Encourage participants to apply their critical thinking skills to their daily use of social networks, share their knowledge with others, and actively contribute to a positive and responsible online community.

CREATING MEDIA CONTENT

Activity: Presentation

Duration: 15 minutes

Instruct participants to work individually or in pairs to create a social media post or article on a given topic. Emphasize the importance of checking facts, using reliable sources, and presenting information in an unbiased and balanced manner. Participants can then share their content with the group, allowing for constructive feedback and discussion.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 10 minutes

Instruction: Participants pose any questions or concerns they may have about critical thinking and social media literacy that arose during the training. Offer additional guidance and clarification if needed. Summarize the key takeaways from the exercise and emphasize the importance of ongoing critical thinking and media literacy practices in the digital space.

CONCLUSION

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 10 minutes

Instruction: Summarize the key points discussed during the exercise program. Emphasize the importance of critical thinking in social media and how it can lead to more informed decision-making, reduced susceptibility to misinformation, and improved online engagement. Provide participants with additional resources as fact-checking websites, tools for evaluating sources, and guides for recognizing bias and misinformation. Discuss how these resources can be used to ensure responsible consumption and sharing of content. Encourage participants to apply their critical thinking skills to their daily use of social networks, share their knowledge with others, and actively contribute to constructive online discussions.

PROGRAM 4:

FAKE NEWS AND DISINFORMATION



PROGRAM 4: FAKE NEWS AND DISINFORMATION

The concept of fake news itself is nothing new; as Burkhardt wrote in 2017, “the ability to have an impact on what people know is an asset that has been prized for many centuries”⁸⁰. The particular issue regarding fake news in the 21st century is the large possibility of impact and spread offered by social networks. This phenomenon has been defined using different terms and from different perspectives: fake news, misinformation, information disorder, disinformation, and post-truth⁸¹.

The European Commission⁸² defined the word “disinformation” as “false, inaccurate, or misleading information, presented and promoted to obtain revenue or intentionally cause public harm”, while other authors⁸³ point out that “fake news” has been chosen as word of the year in British dictionaries such as Collins and Oxford, which define it as false, often sensationalist, information disseminated under the guise of news. The proliferation of this type of news is a problem that affects all citizens, but particularly young Spaniards, who tend to rely on social networks to keep themselves informed, as indicated by Mendiguren, Pérez-Dasilva, and Meso-Ayerdi⁸⁴.

On 31 March 2020, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, stated “we’re not just fighting an epidemic; we’re fighting an infodemic”⁸⁵, referring to news that spreads more easily and faster than the virus. The WHO has defined “infodemic” as “an excessive amount of information about a problem, which makes it more difficult to identify a solution”. The WHO’s definition outlines one of the major problems of misinformation: an excessive amount of information, true or false, that is all equally reachable.

Social networks have frequently raised the level of noise, and in this sense, some studies point out that in critical situations such as the current one, traditional media offer more trust and credibility⁸⁶, although new digital media provide a more rapid response to information queries. The digital media in which we are immersed have allowed any citizen to become a speaker of current affairs, due to the great ease with which users generate and distribute content on different platforms as previously studied by Adoni⁸⁷. In this sense, social networks, due to their horizontal, multidirectional, simultaneous, and unfiltered nature, pose a challenge for the traditional media, as there are now more actors capable of producing and disseminating content. For the first time in history, journalists and citizens have the same tools at their disposal^{88,89,90}.

Misinformation and fake news have become a great global concern since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting all citizens, as recent literature indicates^{91,92, 93,94}.

Current societies are based on huge flows of information and knowledge circulating on the Internet, created not only by traditional means (media communication) but by all users becoming producers^{95,96} which leads to fake news and misinformation. Since social networks emerged at the beginning of the present century, the status of information and knowledge has been transformed, experiencing a remarkable change that has implied a wider online environment enhanced by all users. This new information ecosystem^{97, 98}, providing more freedom in a communicational manner, has presented from the beginning a major problem: allowing people to spread misinformation without surveillance has promoted an information disorder that is difficult to manage and control^{99,100}. This situation has been exacerbated by the pandemic to an unprecedented extent through social media, with special concern among young people.

Teenagers' encounter with fake news is linked to their social media habits, which is worrisome because adolescents spend a lot of time online. Earlier research links consumption of news via social media to exposure to fake news¹⁰¹. Even more unsettling is evidence that younger people share fake news online and that they cannot distinguish between fake and credible news¹⁰². Moreover, most youths who encounter fake news do not check it¹⁰³ and they lacked competence to determine the credibility of online content^{104,105,106}.

Apart from causing confusion¹⁰⁷, fake news is connected to stress and anxiety and is "damaging to children's and adolescent's self-esteem"¹⁰⁸. Amid concerns of rising levels of news fatigue, news avoidance¹⁰⁹ and distrust in news media¹¹⁰, the effect of fake news on teens' participation in news remains unclear.

Yet engaging with news through sharing, liking, and commenting facilitates self-expression, and allows teens to make sense of the world through exchanging ideas¹¹¹. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and YouTube are a significant part of teenagers' media repertoire and are imperative for news, but it is also where teenagers encounter fake news^{112, 113}. Research shows that children and young people follow local, regional, and international news genres including sports, politics, weather, and finance^{114,115}.

A strategy to tackle fake news on social media

As social networks become increasingly influential sources of information, the threat of fake news continues to grow. This challenge necessitates the need for a comprehensive strategy that engages individuals, communities and platforms in the fight against the spread of misinformation. Below is a comprehensive approach to tackling fake news on social media:

- 1. Education and digital literacy:** First of all, young people need to be informed about the spread of fake news and how to identify it. Consumers need to be educated on basic digital literacy principles, such as checking the credibility of sources, understanding the difference between opinion and fact, verifying information before sharing it, and being skeptical of clickbait headlines. Incorporating digital literacy into education programs and organizing workshops can be effective ways of achieving this goal.
- 2. Fact-checking and verification:** Before sharing any information, users should check the facts in it. This may involve searching multiple reliable sources to verify the story, or using fact-checking websites that are dedicated to debunking fake news. Images and videos can be verified using reverse image search tools or video verification tools to check their authenticity.
- 3. Critical Thinking:** Critical thinking is critical in the fight against fake news. Users should always question the purpose of the information they encounter. Who benefits from it? What is the intention behind it? Is it trying to incite strong emotions or reactions? The answers to these questions can help determine the veracity of the information.
- 4. Encourage Whistleblowing:** Social networking platforms usually have options for users to report fake news. Encouraging the use of these features can help curb the spread of misinformation. Users should be trained on how to use these reporting tools effectively.
- 5. Responsible Sharing:** Encourage the principle of responsible sharing. Just because information conforms to someone's pre-existing beliefs does not make it true. Before sharing any information, users should ensure that they are not contributing to the spread of misinformation.
- 6. Community contribution:** fighting fake news is not a solitary endeavor. Communities, whether online forums, groups or larger organizations, need to work together to counter fake news. This can include community guidance, joint fact-checking, and peer education.
- 7. Support algorithm transparency:** Finally, we need to advocate for greater transparency from the platforms themselves. Algorithms that prioritize

sensational content may inadvertently encourage fake news. Pushing for changes to these algorithms and greater transparency about how they work could be an essential part of the strategy.

By following such strategy, users can play an active role in combating the spread of fake news on social networks. This, in turn, contributes to a healthier digital ecosystem where truth and accuracy are valued and encouraged. Implementing a comprehensive strategy to combat fake news on social media involves a set of elements that engage individuals, communities and the platforms themselves. The following describes how this strategy can be put into practice:

- 1. Promoting education and digital literacy:** Organizations, educational institutions and even social media platforms should develop programs to increase digital literacy. This could include adding digital literacy modules to school curricula, running workshops, webinars and creating online resources. Users should be taught how to check sources, identify biased information and distinguish fact from opinion.
- 2. Promote fact-checking and verification:** Fostering a culture of fact-checking before sharing any information is key. This can be done through regular reminders, prompts when sharing articles or even rewards for responsible behavior on social media platforms. Fact-checking organizations can create easy-to-use tools and resources to support this process, and these tools should be widely promoted and easily accessible.
- 3. Building critical thinking:** Critical thinking skills should be fostered through discussion, debate and problem-solving tasks. Discussions on topical issues can be held in online forums where users are encouraged to analyze and critically evaluate information. This promotes healthier discourse and helps identify fake news.
- 4. Encouraging reporting:** Social networking platforms should streamline the reporting process by making it easier for users to report fake news. Users should be guided on how to use these tools through tutorials or prompts. In addition, platforms should act quickly on these reports to reinforce the importance of reporting.
- 5. Making responsible sharing work:** The Think Before You Share principle should be widely promoted. Social networking platforms can implement reminders or prompts to encourage users to check information before sharing. A culture of responsible sharing can also be promoted through online campaigns or challenges.
- 6. Encourage community efforts:** Online communities and groups can establish guidelines to discourage sharing of unverified information.

Moderators can play a critical role in monitoring content and encouraging healthy discussions. Users should be encouraged to correct each other in a respectful and constructive manner if they see misinformation being shared.

7. Advocate for transparent algorithms: Efforts should be made to lobby social media platforms for greater transparency of their algorithms. Public pressure, political advocacy and legislative action can be effective in pushing for these changes. Greater transparency helps to understand the mechanisms behind the distribution of content and can help curb the spread of fake news.

In summary, the implementation of this strategy requires a concerted effort from all actors in the digital space. It requires a change in online behavior and platform policies. Although challenging, this is a necessary endeavor to ensure the accuracy of information in the digital age and to promote a healthier and safer online environment.

There are many games that are aimed at teaching people the important fact checking skills. Some games also put the users in the shoes of fake news generators and teach about the sources that one needs to trust¹¹⁶:

1. Bad News - In Bad News, you take the role of fake newsmonger and drop all pretense of ethics. The task in this game is to slowly build up a fake credibility while increasing the follower count. The goal of the game is to expose the tactics and manipulation techniques that are used to mislead people and build up a following.

2. Which Face is Real - Researchers at the University of Washington created this website to quiz people on whether they can tell a real person's face from a computer-generated one. There are a handful of telltale signs if you're looking at a computer-generated face. The key is to look for imperfections. In the era of deepfakes and generative AI, identifying real and computer-generated faces has become important and this game gives you tricks and tips for identifying computer-generated images.

3. Fakey - Fakey is a game that aims to teach media literacy and study how people interact with misinformation. In Fakey the players have to inspect each article in the feed just as they would do on social media platforms. The player gets five options below a post: share, like, fact-check, hint, and skip. The scores are calculated on the basis of which option the users select. The correct option leads you to a higher score.

4. Find the Fake - Select an age-appropriate quiz to play as a family (parents versus children) to learn and test your knowledge on what fake news, disinformation and misinformation is, and how to stop it from spreading. The game begins by choosing the number of players and choosing an Avatar. Once the game begins, answer the questions and take a moment to review and discuss sections to get tips to build your knowledge. If the users are playing as a team, player 1 will be asked to answer the question first followed by player 2. After you have both answered the question, you'll be shown how well you did.

5. The Fake News Game - In this game you have to spot the news story which is not based on facts. This game helps you to learn what to look for when evaluating your sources. There are several rounds in the game, one tests how well you can assess content on news websites, it also teaches to evaluate academic sources, social media sources and even fake tweets.

6. Fake It to Make It¹¹⁷ - This game takes significantly longer than the games above (1+ hours), but it puts you right into the mindset of someone who is manipulating social media purely for profit. Use instruments to check besides Google - Snopes, Politifact, and FactCheck.org.

7. Tool “B.S. Detector”¹¹⁸ - This browser extension works on Chrome, Opera, Firefox, Safari, and Edge, and gives you warnings when you are on a page that contains possible fake news. It analyzes the links to check for unreliable sources, then tells you why a particular site was flagged.

8. Tool “Media Bias Fact Check” - This Chrome extension is powered by the Media Bias Fact Check database, and it not only alerts you when you are browsing a fake news site but will clue you into the political biases of legitimate sites as well. Accurate facts do not guarantee truth, after all; different presentations can leave you with very different ideas¹¹⁹.

9. Fake News Detector AI¹²⁰ - This Chrome extension is actually built on a neural network, using machine learning to predict whether the website you are visiting is spreading fake news or not. It only runs when you ask it to, which some users may appreciate. Not a Chrome user? You can visit the AI’s portal website and manually enter the web address you want to check. It’s last on the list because it’s not all that accurate, though: in my testing it reported RealClearPolitics and The Intercept as fake news — both sites that definitely have some bias, but are not at all fake.



PROGRAM 4: FAKE NEWS AND DISINFORMATION

TRAINING METHODS AND ACTIONS

This module introduces one of the main problems of the global media environment today - the spread of fake news and the phenomenon of disinformation. The listed activities will enable participants to deepen their understanding of fake news and disinformation by studying different examples from recent years. Participants will be able to explain how news and media can be used to one's advantage and know how to recognize such examples.

Results:

- Participants recognize fake news from real news.
- Participants understand the essence of misinformation.
- Participants know and differentiate between types of fake news.

Basic concepts:

- **What is fake news?**
- **What are the types of fake news? :**
 - Clickbait Propaganda/satire
 - Parody
 - Bad journalism
 - Misleading headlines
 - Trending news
- **How to recognize fake news?**
- **Is this a joke?**
 - How to check the sources?

Training duration: 40 minutes

FAKE NEWS AND DISINFORMATION: HOW TO COUNTER THEM?

What is fake news? Many of the things you read online, especially if they appear on your social media wall, may seem like the truth, but they often aren't.

Definition: Fake news is a partly or wholly fabricated story deliberately created to misinform or mislead readers. Usually, these stories are made up to sway people's opinion, push a particular political agenda, or cause confusion; they are often a profitable business for online publishers. Fake news can fool people by

looking like reputable websites or by using similar names and web addresses as reputable news organizations.

What are the types of fake news? There are different types of fake or misleading news that we need to watch out for. They include:

Clickbait These are deliberately fabricated stories that aim to gain more visitors to a website and increase its advertising revenue. Clickbait stories use sensational headlines to attract attention and drive "clicks" to the publisher's website, usually at the expense of truth and accuracy.

Propaganda Material created with the intention of misleading the public, promoting a biased point of view or a particular political cause or agenda.

Satire/Parody Many websites and social media profiles post fake news stories for entertainment or parody.

Bad Journalism Sometimes reporters or journalists may publish a news story with unverified information or without checking all the facts, which can mislead the audience.

Misleading headlines News stories that are not completely false can be distorted by the use of misleading or biased headlines. This type of news can spread quickly on social media, where only the headlines or small snippets of the full article are displayed on the audience's walls.

Trending News Many people are drawn to news or stories that confirm their own beliefs and prejudices, and fake news can feed on those prejudices. The social media feed usually shows the news and articles that the algorithm thinks we will like based on our personal searches.

HOW TO CHECK SOURCES?

Pay attention to the domain and web address: Established news organizations usually own their own domain and have a standard look that you are familiar with. Sites that end in "com.co" should make you think twice and tell you to do a little more digging to see if you can trust them. This is even if the site looks professional and has a semi-recognizable logo. For example, abcnews.com is a legitimate news source, but abcnews.com.co is not, even though it looks similar.

Read the "About Us" section: Most sites would have a lot of information about the editorial staff, the company that runs it, the members of its board, the mission and ethics of the organization. And the language used is simple and clear. If it's melodramatic and seems pretentious, you should be skeptical. You

should also be able to find more information about the organization's leaders outside of this site as well.

Look at the citations in the material: ...or rather, look at the lack of citations. Most publications have multiple sources in each of their publications who are professionals and knowledgeable in the field in which they speak. If the topic is serious and controversial, it is even more likely to have many citations. For example, look for professors or other academics talking about research they've done. And if they talk about these studies, look them up.

See Who's Saying Them: Once you've found the quotes, see who's speaking in the article and what exactly they're saying. Are these people reputable sources with a title that can be verified after a quick Google search? For example, let's say you come across a post that claims President Obama said he wants to take away every person's gun, followed by a quote. Obama is an official figure whose almost every word is recorded and archived. There are transcripts of almost every word or address he gave. Google these quotes. Find out what the speech was about, who it was aimed at, and what happened next. Even if he said them in an exclusive interview with a given publication, the same quote would be mentioned by other publications that would quote exactly what he said to the original publication.

See comments: Many of these fake or misleading stories are shared on social media. Headlines are meant to grab readers' attention, but they should also accurately reflect what the text is about. Headlines are often written in exaggerated language with the intent to mislead and then tacked on to posts that are either on a completely different topic or simply not true. This type of post usually generates a lot of comments on Facebook and Twitter. If a large number of comments claim that the article is false or misleading, it probably is.

Search for the photos on Google: A photo should be true to the story it illustrates. That doesn't happen often. If the people who write fake news don't even leave their homes or interview anyone for those articles, they're unlikely to take their own photos either. Do a reverse image search on Google. This is done by right-clicking on the photo and choosing to do a Google search with it. If the photo appears on many other sites on many different topics, there is a good chance it does not illustrate what the first story claims.

Help a Friend: If you see your friends sharing obviously fake news, be a friend and politely tell them it's not true. Don't shy away from engaging in such conversations, even if you find them uncomfortable.

"TRUTH OR LIE"

Activity: Quiz

Duration: 10 min

Instructions:

1. Play the truth or lie quizzes on the projector. (1 minute).
 2. Participants answer questions by raising their hand to vote whether the headline represents real or fake news. (5 minutes)
 3. Count the votes and then tell the participants the correct answer. (4 minutes)
-

NAME THE FAKE NEWS

Activity: Test

Duration: 10 minutes

Instructions:

1. Hand out sheets with the different types of fake news and a brief description of each type. (1 minute)
 2. Show participants the following titles. Also hand out different worksheet titles. (2 minutes)
 3. Ask them to match each type of fake news with its corresponding headline. (5 minutes)
 4. Discuss the results. (3 minutes)
-

SPREADING FALSE INFORMATION ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

Activity: Brainstorming

Duration: 10 minutes

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to recall the last time they noticed a fake news story on Facebook. (2 minutes)
2. Invite them to come up with solutions – for example how not to spread misinformation (3 min).
3. Summarize their suggestions into a list. Write it on the board and introduce them to the other steps. You can extend the duration by presenting the box with additional news checking methods.

IDENTIFYING FAKE NEWS

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 10 minutes

Instructions:

1. Show the video. (3 minutes)
2. Engage participants in a discussion by asking them the following questions (7 minutes): Have you ever come across fake news online? If so, were you able to recognize that the story was fake? Worried about being fooled by fake news? Have you ever shared a fake news story unintentionally or on purpose? Describe the circumstances.

ONLINE DISINFORMATION

Activity: Case study

Duration: 20 min

Instructions: In small groups, ask participants to analyze the case study and discuss the factors that contributed to the spread of misinformation. Start a group discussion about the impact of online misinformation, strategies for identifying and debunking false information, and the role of media literacy in combating the spread of misinformation.

FACT CHECKING AND SHARING RELIABLE INFORMATION

Activity: Practical exercise

Duration: 30 minutes

Instructions: Provide participants with a selection of news articles or social media posts. Assign them the task of verifying the information using reliable sources and checking its accuracy. Encourage them to critically evaluate the content before sharing it on their social media profiles, emphasizing the responsibility to prevent the spread of misinformation. The participants will gain a better understanding of evaluating sources, verifying information, recognizing bias and creating credible content. These skills will enable participants to navigate social media platforms more effectively, make informed decisions, and contribute to a more accurate and trustworthy online environment.

FIND IT

Activity: Competition

Duration: 20 minutes

Instructions: Separate students to play in teams. They must perform a profound search to find as much AI-Powered tools for fighting fake news as they can. The team that has found the most is winning.

IDENTIFY POTENTIAL BIAS OR MISINFORMATION

Activity: Practical exercise

Duration: 160 minutes

Purpose: The purpose of this exercise is to improve participants' critical thinking skills and media literacy in the context of social media. By participating in this exercise, participants will develop the ability to critically evaluate information, identify potential bias or misinformation, and make informed decisions when consuming and sharing content on social networks.

Introduction (10 minutes): Begin by discussing the importance of critical thinking and media literacy in the digital age. Explain how social networks are often filled with information, including news, articles, and opinions, making it essential to develop the skills needed to navigate and evaluate the credibility of content.

Media Literacy Discussion (15 minutes): Begin a group discussion on media literacy by considering the following questions:

- What does media literacy mean to you?
- What are some challenges you face when viewing and reading social media content?
- How can critical thinking skills help in assessing the credibility of information shared on social media?

Evaluating News Sources (20 minutes): Provide participants with a selection of news articles or social media posts from a variety of sources. Instruct them to read and evaluate the credibility and reliability of the sources. Encourage participants to consider factors such as source reputation, author credentials, presence of bias, and use of credible references.

Fake news exercise (20 minutes): Present participants with a set of social media posts or news headlines that may contain misinformation, rumors, or unsubstantiated claims. Divide participants into small groups and assign each group a post or headline to fact-check. Encourage them to research credible

sources, verify the accuracy of the information, and provide evidence-based conclusions.

Group presentations and discussion (20 minutes): Ask each group to present their findings from the fact-checking to the larger group. Begin a discussion about the challenges encountered during the exercise, the strategies used to identify misinformation, and the importance of reliable sources and critical thinking on social media.

Recognizing Bias (15 minutes): Provide participants with examples of social media posts or articles that show bias or present information from a particular perspective. In small groups or pairs, ask participants to identify the biases present and discuss the potential impact on interpretation of the information. Encourage participants to reflect on the importance of considering multiple perspectives and seeking balanced information.

PROGRAM 5:

PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION



PROGRAM 5: PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

Personal data drives our digital economies. It can open doors and build connections, but it also can be exploited or misused. Privacy laws have provided a bulwark against careless or malicious actors for more than twenty years now. Only recently, however, have we seen laws designed around the special vulnerabilities of young people¹²¹.

Even children and young people surf the world wide web on a daily basis. But what do they get up to on their smartphones and PCs? From cyber-mobbing to careless sharing of data – the risks and hazards to children and young people on the Internet are particularly high. In this blog post, we examine what role parents and teachers can play in terms of providing data protection for the younger generation. Data protection has nothing to do with age. This view is also shared by the authors of the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It even includes the following clause¹²²: “Children merit specific protection with regard to their personal data, as they may be less aware of the risks, consequences and safeguards concerned and their rights in relation to the processing of personal data”. The European Data Protection Board (EDPB) has developed a series of Guidelines on specific aspects of GDPR, including as regards the protection of children’s data. Guidelines 05/2020 detail conditions for the provision of consent for the processing of children’s data to be “lawful”¹²³. A range of further Guidelines consistently reiterate the need to apply additional safeguards for children, for example, as concerns dark patterns, 3 the targeting of social media users⁴ and data protection by design and default¹²⁴.

After all, anyone, regardless of their age, who is active online leaves behind tracks – of data. From search engine requests to browsing histories, location data, social media posts, cookies and so on, everything is carefully collected and analyzed by providers keen to gain information about the behavior of individual users. Based on this, they learn about people’s preferences and can use personalized advertising and content to create an appetite for (unnecessary) consumption or exert influence in other ways. Many people – but especially children and young people – have little or no awareness of their digital footprint. Likewise, they are equally unaware that the Internet remembers everything. Once uploaded to social media, data such as a baby photo or a snapshot of a wild teenage party often remains accessible there indefinitely. Depending on the selected privacy settings, this data may also be accessible to persons who should not see these images and who may even distribute them against the wishes of the people featured in them¹²⁵.

The Data Protection Commission (DPC) has produced three short guides for children on data protection and their rights under the GDPR. These guides are aimed mainly at children aged 13 and over, as this is the age at which children can begin signing up for many forms of social media on their own¹²⁶.

Misuse of personal data is done in order to inflict harm to another person (harm to good name and reputation or violation of privacy). Here are some examples¹²⁷:

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

Personal data can be misused to commit some offences; e.g. fraud or use of someone's personal data to gain an undue advantage, such as use of someone's personal data to conclude fake contracts (the so-called identity theft).

EXAMPLE A: Person A creates a fake Facebook account as person B, publishes a photograph of person B and their personal data known to Person A—name, surname, age, etc. Person A then goes on to publish inappropriate and/or vulgar content on this Facebook account, casting Person B in a bad light.

Individuals can be convinced to provide their personal data, for example by making them believe that they have received a large inheritance or won in a prize competition, all with the aim to gain an undue advantage.

EXAMPLE B: Person A uses Person B's personal data to conclude a "fake" contract with a telecommunications operator; acting as Person B, Person A concludes a contract on behalf of Person B, but to Person A's benefit, to obtain a mobile phone and a mobile phone number and incurs expenses which they do not cover, while the debt is borne by Person B, who has nothing to do with the said contract since the contract was concluded under false pretenses, by using their personal data.

We recommend that you are particularly careful, responsible and discerning with your personal data and that you do not send your data, especially online, to unknown persons or persons you do not know very well if you do not have reliable information about their identity.

EXAMPLE C: A person receives a notification on a social media platform that they have won in a prize competition. To be able to receive their prize, they need to provide a copy of the front and back side of their ID card. The ID card copy is then misused to remotely conclude a fake subscription contract.

The more personal data are required from you by someone online (for example, a full copy of your ID card), the greater the possibility of unlawful disclosure of your personal data, identity theft and other personal data misuses. Please keep in mind that only competent authorities and legal persons are entitled and authorized to request your ID card and data from it pursuant to special regulations and operating terms and conditions; i.e. the police and service providers – banks, telecommunications operators – for the purpose of unambiguous identification of citizens/clients (presenting the ID card to the salesperson who is selling you alcohol and tobacco products, when checking-in in accommodation facilities, using rent-a-car services, etc.). Employers may also request their employees' ID cards under the conditions prescribed by law.

What types of data do social media platforms collect?

Social networks often collect and store vast amounts of personal data, including user preferences, location and browsing habits. Misuse of such data by malicious actors or even by the platforms themselves can have dire consequences, such as identity theft, targeted ads, and invasion of privacy.

When users create a social media account and use the platform, they leave a digital footprint on the internet. Companies collect personal information, along with interests and locations, from the platform by using tracking cookies, geofencing and cross-site tracking. When users sign up for an account, they agree to the terms and conditions, which enable social media platforms to collect data. Even if an account is private, advertisers and scammers can get sensitive data, such as the following¹²⁸:

- status updates, including work, life and relationship events;
- religious beliefs;
- profile information, including name, contact information and birthdate;
- location data, including your hometown, check-in locations, previous cities lived or exact address;
- personal interests, such as buying history and website interactions;
- shared content, such as status updates, photos and videos;
- engagement on social media, including likes, shares or comments on other posts;
- employment information, including current or past jobs; and
- personal identifiers, such as age, race and gender.

Social media posts can reveal attitudinal data, which captures feelings and emotions. This data measures how users feel about certain messages and content. Attitudinal data can be used with surveys, interviews, reviews, feedback, preferences and complaints.

Common social media privacy issues

With the large amount of data on user social media accounts, scammers can find enough information to spy on users, steal identities and attempt scams. Data protection issues and loopholes in privacy controls can put user information at risk when using social media. Other social media privacy issues include the following¹²⁹:

- 1. Data mining for identity theft** - scammers do not need a great deal of information to steal someone's identity. They can start with publicly available information on social media to help target victims. For example, scammers can gather usernames, addresses, email addresses and phone numbers to target users with phishing scams. Even with an email address or phone number, a scammer can find more information, such as leaked passwords, Social Security numbers and credit card numbers.
- 2. Privacy setting loopholes** - social media accounts may not be as private as users think. For example, if a user shared something with a friend and they reposted it, the friend's friends can also see the information. The original user's reposted information is now in front of a completely different audience. Even closed groups may not be completely private because postings can be searchable, including any comments.
- 3. Location settings** - location app settings may still track user whereabouts. Even if someone turns off their location settings, there are other ways to target a device's location. The use of public Wi-Fi, cellphone towers and websites can also track user locations. Always check that the GPS location services are turned off, and browse through a VPN to avoid being tracked. User location paired with personal information can provide accurate information to a user profile. Bad actors can also use this data to physically find users or digitally learn more about their habits.
- 4. Harassment and cyberbullying** - social media can be used for cyberbullying. Bad actors don't need to get into someone's account to send threatening messages or cause emotional distress. For example, children with social media accounts face backlash from classmates with inappropriate comments. Doxxing – a form of cyberbullying – involves bad actors purposely sharing personal information about a person to cause

harm, such as a person's address or phone number. They encourage others to harass this person.

5. **False information** - people can spread disinformation on social media quickly. Trolls also look to provoke other users into heated debates by manipulating emotions. Most social media platforms have content moderation guidelines, but it may take time for posts to be flagged. Double-check information before sending or believing something on social media.
6. **Malware and viruses** - social media platforms can be used to deliver malware, which can slow down a computer, attack users with ads and steal sensitive data. Cybercriminals take over the social media account and distribute malware to both the affected account and all the user's friends and contacts.

Phishing is a form of online fraud in which attackers attempt to trick people into revealing sensitive information, such as passwords, credit card information, or social security numbers. These attacks are usually carried out through **fake emails, messages or websites that look legitimate, tricking users into unknowingly revealing their personal data.**

Preventive measures:

- **Phishing Awareness Training:** Train people to recognize suspicious emails, messages and links and avoid clicking on them;
- **Use strong and unique passwords:** Encourage the use of complex passwords for online accounts and advise against using the same password for multiple platforms;
- **Enable two-factor authentication (2FA):** Encourage the use of 2FA whenever possible, as it provides an additional layer of security to protect accounts from unauthorized access.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE¹³⁰:

What's personal data?

Personal data is basically any piece of information that **helps someone to know who you are**, like your full name, your birthday, your email address, your phone number, or your home address. It's not only information that's **written down**, it can also be information about what you **look like** or **sound like**, for example photos or videos that you've posted online, or your voice recordings. It can even be **information about what you're interested in**, like things you search for online, or the kinds of posts you click on the most on social media. Personal data

can also be information that you might not even know is being collected about you. For example, your image might be captured on a security camera in a shopping center or information might be collected from your phone when you log on to a public Wi-Fi network, like the Wi-Fi in shops or cafes.

What's data protection?

Data protection is about the **rules** that organizations have to follow and the **rights** you have when you share your personal data. There are lots of rules that organizations have to follow when they use your data in any way, from collecting it to storing it, sharing it with someone else, or getting rid of it. You have **rights** over your personal data, such as the right to ask for a copy of your own personal data or to have it deleted. These rules and rights are called **data protection**, and they apply in the real world and the online world. Children and young people have exactly the same rights as adults when it comes to their personal data.

Who collects personal data about me?

Lots of organizations collect your personal data in real life, for example your school, your local sports club where you're a member and your doctor. They collect different information about you like how you're doing at school and your grades, or information about your health and any illnesses you might have. Your personal data is also collected by websites, social media platforms and apps that you use. In fact, a lot of personal data that is collected about you happens online. When you use social media, you're sharing information about you and photos and videos of yourself. When you use a route planner app on your phone, you're sharing information about your location and where you're going. When you click on ads, fill in forms or play games online, it all involves sharing personal data. We all share countless pieces of personal data every day, so **data protection law is important for all of us**. It makes sure that the organizations that collect this personal data keep it safe and use it fairly.

How do organizations use my personal data?

Organizations use your personal data for lots of different reasons. For example, a school uses your data to provide you with an education and keep track of your grades. A hospital collects your personal data to keep a record of when you've been sick and what treatments or medicine you were given. Your local sports club uses your data to tell you when training sessions and matches are taking place, or to contact your parents or guardians if you've had an accident or an

injury during a game. Online companies can also use your personal data to make their website, app or platform more relevant to what you're interested in. An example of this is when you're watching a TV show on a streaming service and it remembers what episode you're on or it tells you about a similar type of show you might be interested in.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE¹³¹:

KEEPING YOUR PERSONAL DATA SAFE ONLINE

When you go online, you leave a digital footprint behind you. This footprint is like a record of how you behave on the internet and is based on things like your activities online (e.g. the websites you visit, what you click on) but also the personal data you share. Taking just a few simple steps whenever you go online will really help you keep your data much safer.

- 1. Check your social media profile settings** - The Data Protection Commission (DPC) recommends that social media accounts for under 18s should automatically be set to "private", which means that only your friends can see what you like, post and share. If your profile on a social media platform is already "public" or you change it to "public" then everyone and anyone can see what you're sharing and talking about online or send you messages. Always think very carefully about switching off any privacy controls that are there to keep you safe.
- 2. Think before you post** - Whether your profile is set to public or private, remember that once you post something online it can be really hard to delete it completely from the internet. So before you post, ask yourself if this is something you really want everyone to see for years to come.
- 3. Treat other people's data the way you would treat your own** - Listen to your friends or family if they ask you to take down pictures or videos of them. You might want them to do the same for you one day!
- 4. Be careful tagging yourself or "checking in"** - Sharing your location online can be risky so turn off your location settings if you don't need them. Think twice about checking into places or tagging yourself as somewhere.
- 5. Don't let yourself be "nudged"** - Sometimes, apps and platforms try to "nudge" you into handing over more information than they actually need. Maybe the button they want you to click on is big, bright and in the middle of the screen while the other option is tiny and easy to miss. Watch out for these

tactics and choose the option that you're most comfortable with, not just the one that's easiest to click on.

6. Read the terms and conditions (as best you can)! - Companies should give you information about what it is they do with your personal data. That information should be written in plain English that you can easily understand and should be easy for you to find. Ask a parent or trusted adult if you are unsure about anything.

7. Don't just click "Accept all" - The next time you see a privacy notice or a cookie banner, think about whether you want to change the settings rather than just clicking on "accept all" cookies. Look for the button that allows you to reject any cookies that are not needed or essential. Otherwise, you may be agreeing to share more information than you would like or realize.

8. Know the value of your data - "Free" services aren't always free. A lot of the personal data we share online is used by companies to make money from things like advertisements. Always ask yourself "Am I getting a fair deal here?"

9. Remember, you are in control - You have rights when it comes to your personal data. Online platforms and companies have to listen to you if you want a copy of your data or want to delete your social media.

10. Keep your parents in the loop - Even if you're in control of your personal data, it's always a good idea to keep your parents or a trusted adult in the loop and to ask for their help if you need it. Never lie about your age or pretend to be your parent when signing up for social media!

11. Delete it when you're done - Don't leave accounts open that you no longer use. They could get hacked and be used to break into your other accounts, especially if you have weak passwords.

12. Don't use the same password for everything! - That just makes it too easy for your data to be stolen. Never use the same password twice and keep them as unusual and original as possible. Don't base your passwords on obvious things that someone else could guess, like your pet's name or your favorite TV show. Use a password manager if you can.

13. If it looks dodgy, don't click on it - Did you get a fishy message from a stranger or even a friend? It could be a scam of some kind. Don't open it, don't click on any links and delete it straight away. Better safe than sorry.

14. Never use unsecured Wi-Fi - It may seem easy because you can just click and join but unsecured networks are very risky. A hacker using the same network could use it to steal your data or even take control of your device!

15. Keep your devices up to date! - It's always tempting to click "remind me later" when you're asked to install an update. But these updates often contain important protections against the latest viruses and scams. Always install updates as soon as possible.

In conclusion: It is estimated that one-third of global internet users are under the age of 18. As digital technologies increasingly mediate nearly all facets of their lives, including their education, young people encounter unique opportunities and risks online. It is imperative to ensure that well-meaning but perhaps rushed efforts to protect youth from risks do not significantly limit their access to valuable opportunities. Rather, these efforts must both protect and empower young people while allowing them to gradually develop autonomy and resilience¹³² (see figure below):

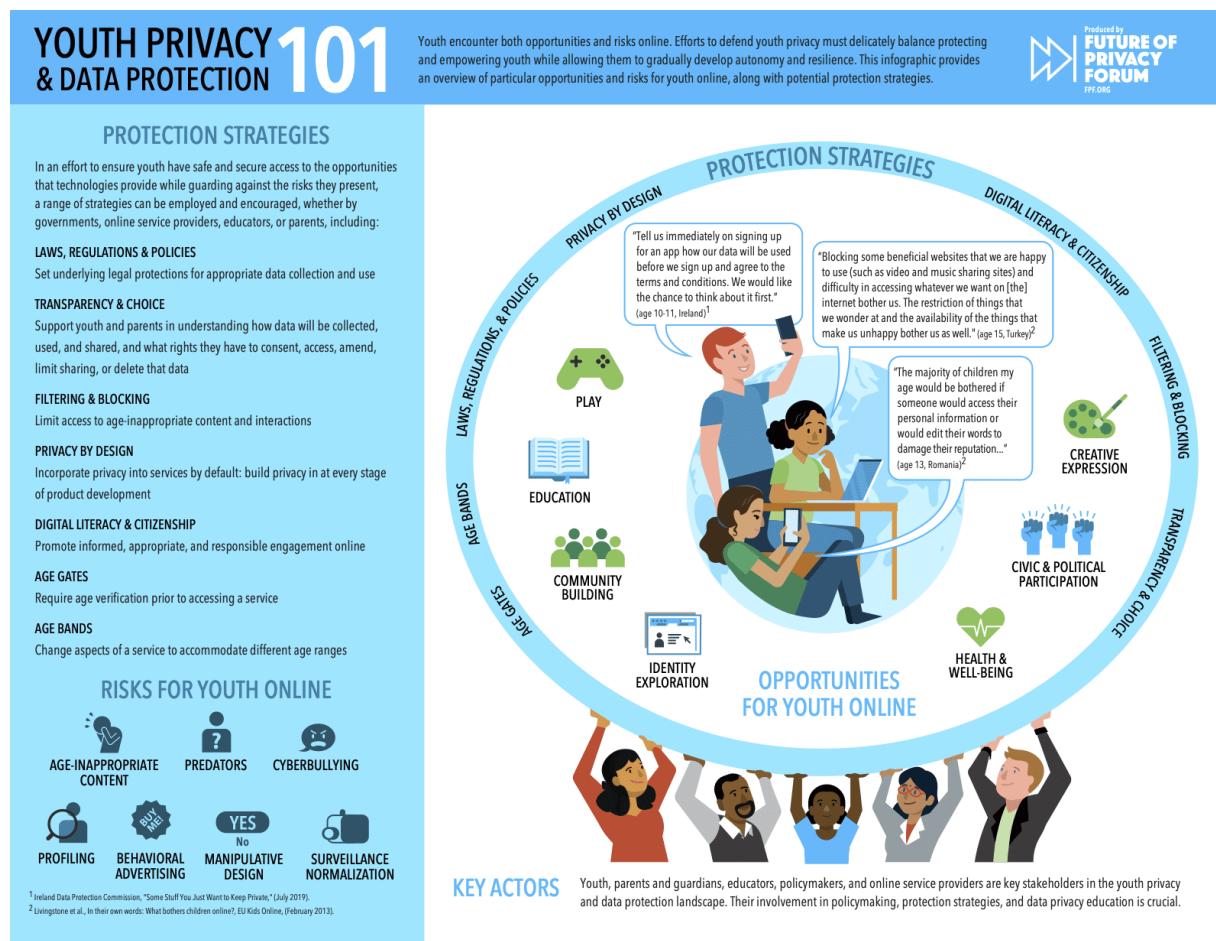


Figure 14. Youth Privacy and Data Protection 101¹³³



PROGRAM 5: PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

TRAINING METHODS AND ACTIONS

WHO KNOWS YOUR SECRETS?

Part 1

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: What is a secret you have about yourself? Keep this secret in your mind. You won't have to share this secret with anyone or write it down. Now answer these questions in your own mind — don't speak your answers out loud or write them down:

- How many people in this room know the secret?
- How many people in your neighborhood know the secret?
- How many people that you have never met face to face know the secret?

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: Imagine that you had to write down that secret on a piece of paper and one random person in this group was to read it. Here are some more questions — again, answer them only in your mind, not out loud or in writing. After one week goes by:

- How many people in this room would now know the secret?
- How many people in your neighborhood would now know the secret?
- How many people that you have never met face to face would now know the secret?

Part 2

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: You need to think of people who are likely to see a secret or other piece of information about you as “the audience” for that information. Having a better sense of the audience may help you more easily determine the information you feel comfortable sharing and what to not share with others. An audience is made up of a person or a group of people that can access a particular piece of information. With new technologies today, audiences can grow very quickly. Because of this potential for rapid audience growth, it's difficult — if not impossible — for you to know or limit the audience for your online information

and activities. While it's great that audiences can grow quickly when you want to share your work with a lot of people, it's not great when this happens with information that you want to keep private. Unfortunately, private information — especially embarrassing information — is often exciting to people when they see it, so once this type of information is out there online, it can be very challenging to control who sees this content. Whenever you share information online (even just directly with one person, like in a text or private message), you should be prepared for the possibility that it may spread well beyond the audience you intended to reach.

Part 3

ASK YOUR STUDENTS: When you post a status update, photo, or other information on social media, who is your intended audience? Does it depend on the social media platform? Or the context?

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: It depends on your privacy settings as well as the social media platform you choose, but your audience could include just your closest friends/followers/connections or be broad enough to include anyone who uses that social media platform or anyone who searches for you online. But no matter who the audience is, information can be copied and posted somewhere else, someone can take a photo/screenshot of the content, or information can be shared through in-person and online conversations.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- Who is your intended audience when you add content on social media?
- Who is your intended audience when, for example, you post on someone else's Facebook timeline or when you add content to another person's social media account (e.g., by commenting on one of their photos, tagging them in a post or photo)?

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: This will depend on both your and their privacy settings, but often the content will be visible to their friends/followers/connections, which will include people you don't know — this might include their family members or administrators, or teachers at their school.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS: When you send a message (e.g., text, email, private/direct message on social media), who is your intended audience?

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: Your audience is the person you're sending it to but be careful — others might see it as well.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- How can your message reach people other than the person you sent it to? Possible ways include through photos/screenshots, forwarding, and in-person phone sharing.
- In which cases might reaching a larger audience be useful? Possible examples include hoping to spread a message to a large audience, mobilizing people, or raising awareness.
- In which cases could reaching a bigger audience than intended be problematic? Sharing beyond the intended audience can get you in trouble, cause embarrassment, reputational harms.
- What are some situations where maintaining a good online reputation might be important? Possible examples include school/college/university applications, job applications, and making new friends.

RIGHT TO PRIVACY

Activity: Group work

Duration: 15 minutes

Instructions: Introduce the concept of "right to privacy" (3 minutes). Divide the participants into 4 groups and give them a copy of one of the privacy cases (2 minutes). Each group should identify what type of personal information was disclosed, how it might affect the affected party, and how it could have been prevented. (5 minutes). Invite each group to share their findings with the group. (5 minutes).

Introduction: We have the right to control information related to our name, SSN, address, date of birth, personal correspondence, relatives, family and intimate life, health status. The right to privacy also includes the right to be left alone. Privacy is our fundamental human right, which must be respected by the whole of society. In some specific cases, however, there may be a good reason for someone's data to be disclosed, for example when it is an important matter for society. What can be disclosed and how, and when it is in the public interest, is a matter of judgement in each individual case. The public status of the people involved is also linked to the public interest in their privacy. In the case of a public figure, such as a politician, whose actions have a high level of public interest, disclosure of their private life is considered more permissible than in cases involving ordinary citizens.

CASE STUDIES

Case study №1: A young teacher forgets her phone unlocked on her desk in the classroom. Without her permission, a student looks at the pictures saved on the phone. The participant selects a personal photo that the teacher sent to her husband for Valentine's Day and shows it to the group, then posts it on social media.

Case study №2: After breaking up with her boyfriend, a young woman finds out that he was able to access her personal Instagram account, posting personal messages and information related to their relationship. He has also changed her password so that she can no longer access it and accuses her of posting the information herself.

Case study №3: A family goes on vacation and the daughter posts pictures of everyone at the beach on her Facebook profile. Her phone automatically notes the location. When the family comes home a week later, they find out their home has been robbed. The thief found out the house was empty from the girl's social media posts.

PRIVACY AND SECURITY AWARENESS QUIZ

Activity: Quiz

Duration: 30 minutes

Instructions: To raise awareness of online privacy risks and the importance of protecting personal information.

1. Develop a quiz with questions related to online privacy, data security, and safe social networking practices.
2. Conduct the quiz as a group activity or through an online survey platform.
3. Encourage participants to answer the questions to the best of their ability and discuss their answers afterwards.
4. Provide explanations and advice for each question, focusing on ways to protect personal information and stay safe online.
5. Complete the exercise by summarizing the key privacy and security practices that young people should adopt while using social media.
6. The key to effectively addressing dangerous social media trends and risky behavior among young people is to encourage open communication, encourage critical thinking and empower them to make informed and responsible choices online.

RECOGNIZE AND AVOID PHISHING

Activity: Quiz

Duration: 15 minutes

Instructions:

1. Explain what phishing is and how it is done through emails, messages or fake websites.
2. Show examples of phishing attempts to help participants recognize common red flags.
3. Discuss the potential consequences of falling victim to phishing attacks, such as identity theft and financial loss.
4. Conduct an interactive quiz or role-play where participants identify phishing attempts.

PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

Activity: Practical exercise

Duration: 15 minutes

Instructions:

1. Emphasize the importance of protecting personal information on social networks.
2. Provide practical advice on changing privacy settings, controlling shared information and avoiding oversharing.
3. Discuss the potential risks of sharing sensitive data on social networks.
4. Encourage participants to review and update their social media privacy settings during training.

RESPECTING THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 15 minutes

Steps:

1. Start a discussion with the participants about the need to respect the rights of other users online by presenting the following statements and asking them whether they agree or disagree with them (5 minutes):
 - Today, in the age of social networks, it is easy for everyone to be a source of information and post their own stories.
 - It is important not only to choose our sources of information responsibly, but also to be responsible about sharing information.

- Respecting the privacy of others can sometimes conflict with the right to free expression.
 - Sharing information should not violate the rights or hurt the feelings of others.
2. Divide participants into pairs and ask them the following questions to discuss among themselves (write the questions on the board) (5 minutes):
- Is it correct to tag someone in photos on social media without their consent?
 - Is it acceptable to post part of a private chat with another person on your wall? Is it OK to screenshot private messages without the other person's consent?
 - How would you feel if someone posted your personal information without your consent?
 - How would you feel if you found out you had harmed a friend after posting information about him/her without his/her consent?
3. Invite some of the pairs to share their reflections and record some of the highlights on the board (5 minutes).

PRIVACY SETTINGS & PERSONAL INFORMATION ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

By engaging in this hands-on exercise, participants will better understand privacy settings, learn how to protect their personal information, and become more aware of their online privacy. Encourage participants to continue exploring and adjusting their privacy settings after the exercise to maintain a safe and secure online presence.

Objective: The purpose of this exercise is to help participants understand the importance of privacy settings and to enable them to review and adjust their settings on social media platforms. By actively engaging with their privacy settings, participants will learn how to protect their personal information and improve their online privacy.

Introduction (10 minutes): Begin by providing a brief overview of the importance of privacy settings and the potential risks associated with sharing personal information online. Explain how privacy settings can help you control who has access to their information and how it is displayed.

Review privacy settings (15 minutes): Instruct participants to work on their personal profile on the social network of their choice. Walk them through a step-by-step overview of the platform's privacy settings. Highlight key areas such as

account visibility, information shared with third-party apps, profile visibility, and photo/video privacy.

Discussion (10 minutes): Facilitate a group discussion by asking the following questions:

- What did you find during your review of privacy settings?
- Were there any settings or options that surprised you?
- How do you think adjusting these settings might improve your online privacy and security?
- What challenges or concerns did you encounter while navigating the privacy settings?

Privacy settings adjustments (20 minutes): Give participants time to adjust their privacy settings based on their preferences and the information shared during the discussion. Encourage them to consider the visibility of their profile, the audience for their posts, and the access granted to personal information such as contact details or location.

Sharing personal experiences (15 minutes): Ask participants to share their experiences and challenges they have faced while adjusting their privacy settings. Encourage them to discuss any changes they have made and why these changes have been important to them. This fosters a supportive environment where participants can learn from each other's experiences.

Tips and best practices (10 minutes): Summarize key privacy tips and best practices, such as:

- Regularly review and update privacy settings, as platform updates can affect settings.
- Be careful when accepting friend requests or contact requests from strangers.
- Think carefully before sharing personal information, especially sensitive details, in public posts or profiles.
- Adjust your location settings to limit sharing your location.
- Enable two-factor authentication for added security.

Q&A and closing exercise (10 minutes): Allow youth participants to speak and ask questions. Provide clarification and additional guidance if needed. Close the exercise by emphasizing the importance of regularly reviewing and maintaining privacy settings to ensure ongoing protection of personal information.

RESPONSIBLE SHARING AND DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Aim: To promote responsible content sharing, critical thinking and digital citizenship among young people on social networks.

Presentation: Give a presentation on responsible content sharing, including topics such as fact-checking, evaluating sources, avoiding misinformation, and understanding the consequences of sharing inappropriate or harmful content.

Group activity: Fact-checking exercise (30 minutes):

Provide participants with a set of social media posts or news headlines and ask them to verify the information using reliable sources. Encourage critical thinking and small group discussion to identify potential inaccuracies.

Digital Citizenship Discussion (25 minutes): Engage participants in a discussion about digital citizenship, covering topics such as online ethics, copyright awareness, online privacy and the importance of respectful and inclusive online behavior. Encourage participants to share their thoughts and experiences.

Create principles for digital citizenship (30 minutes): In small groups, ask participants to create a list of principles for digital citizenship, outlining the rules they commit to follow in their online interactions. Encourage creativity and inclusiveness. Each group should present their pledge to the larger group and discuss its meaning.

ONLINE SAFETY AND CYBER SECURITY

Aim: To educate young people about online safety, cyber security and the importance of protecting their personal information on social networks.

Presentation: Online Safety (20 minutes): Give a presentation on online safety, including topics such as password protection, privacy settings, recognizing and reporting online threats, and strategies for protecting personal information.

Online Safety Scenarios (30 minutes):

Present different online safety scenarios to participants. Divide them into small groups and ask them to discuss and develop strategies for dealing with each scenario responsibly and safely. Encourage the sharing of personal experiences and insights.

Cybersecurity Activity: Personal Information Audit (30 minutes):

Ask participants to conduct a personal information audit, examining the information they have shared online and the privacy settings of their social

media accounts. Encourage them to make the necessary adjustments to protect their personal information.

Digital wellbeing and self-care (20 minutes): Conclude the program by discussing the importance of digital wellbeing and self-care. Encourage participants to set boundaries, take breaks from social media when needed, and participate in offline activities that promote their well-being.

PROGRAM 6:

SAFE & POSITIVE COMMUNICATION



PROGRAM 6: SAFE & POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

The widespread use of social networks has fundamentally changed the way we communicate. These platforms offer numerous opportunities for connection, expression and learning. However, they also pose potential risks such as misinformation, invasion of privacy, cyberbullying and others. It is in this context that this handbook becomes indispensable and useful for:

- **Digital Literacy:** The Handbook helps users understand the nuances of digital communication, including the persistence of online comments, the interpretation of tone in texts, and the public nature of posts. This is critical to avoid misunderstandings and encourage respectful interaction;
- **Cyberbullying Prevention:** By providing clear guidance on what constitutes acceptable online behavior, the Handbook can help deter cyberbullying. It can also provide resources and strategies for dealing with cyberbullying should it occur;
- **Online safety:** the Handbook can provide information on how to protect personal data, secure accounts and avoid potential threats such as fraud or malware, thus contributing to a safer online environment;
- **Privacy management:** understanding privacy settings and data sharing is integral to maintaining privacy online. The guide can teach users how to effectively manage their privacy across platforms;
- **Reputation management:** what a person posts online can affect their personal and professional reputation. A Guide can help users understand the long-term implications of their digital footprint;
- **Ethical Communication:** Promoting respect, empathy and courtesy in online communication can help create a positive digital culture. A guide can emphasize these principles, encouraging ethical and respectful communication;
- **Critical thinking:** In an age of misinformation and 'fake news', a Handbook can help users develop the critical thinking skills needed to assess the credibility of information found online;
- **Legal awareness:** Users should be aware of the potential legal implications of online activities. The guide can shed light on topics such as defamation, copyright infringement and privacy;
- **Emotional wellbeing:** Excessive or unhealthy use of social media can affect mental health. A Handbook can offer strategies for maintaining a balanced and healthy approach to social media use.

In a digital age where social networks are essential communication tools, a handbook to safe and responsible use is not a luxury, but a necessity. It provides users with the knowledge and skills to safely, responsibly and effectively navigate the digital landscape, improving their overall online experience. Safe and responsible social networking refers to the practice of interacting online in a way that protects one's own and others' well-being, respects privacy, and promotes a positive digital environment filled with respect. Safe and responsible social networking involve:

A. Respectful communication: this includes treating others with kindness and respect, just as you would when communicating face-to-face. This means avoiding hostile or inflammatory language, respecting different points of view, and not engaging in or tolerating harassment or stalking. Respectful social networking refers to the practice of interacting online in a way that recognizes and respects the rights, freedoms, views and individuality of others. It means expressing yourself in a considerate, polite and truthful manner while being open to the ideas and opinions of others. The key elements that define respectful communication on social media are:

- **Courtesy:** This includes using respectful language, avoiding insults, and following the norms and rules of each social media platform. It also includes acknowledging others' comments or responses in a polite manner.
- **Tolerance and open-mindedness:** Social networks are a mix of different cultures, beliefs and perspectives. Respectful communication involves being open and tolerant of these differences, even when you disagree with them.
- **Nondiscriminatory language:** This includes refraining from posting content that is racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, or otherwise discriminatory. Respectful communication means treating everyone equally, regardless of their background, race, gender, or beliefs.
- **Constructive criticism:** If you disagree with someone, do so in a respectful and constructive way. Avoid personal attacks and focus on the ideas or issues being discussed.
- **Empathy and Goodwill:** Understanding and considering the feelings of others is a key part of respectful communication. Be supportive and kind, and before you post, consider how your words may affect others.

- **Respect privacy:** Avoid sharing personal information about others without their consent and respect people's choices about what to share about themselves.
- **Sincerity and Honesty:** Be truthful and honest in your interactions. Spreading false information or pretending to be someone you are not is not a respectful communication.

At its core, respectful communication on social media is about fostering a positive, inclusive online environment where everyone feels valued, listened to and safe. It involves understanding that behind every screen is a human being who deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

B. Privacy Consideration: Protecting your own privacy and that of others is a cornerstone of responsible communication. This includes not sharing sensitive personal information without consent, being careful what information, your posts reveal, and using privacy settings to control who can see your content. Social Media Privacy Awareness refers to understanding and knowing how your personal information is collected, used, stored and shared on social media platforms, and the steps you can take to protect your privacy. It includes a comprehensive understanding of privacy policies, individual privacy settings, data security practices, and digital rights that are critical in this digital age. The key components of social media privacy awareness are

- **Understanding privacy policies:** Each social network platform has its own privacy policy that describes how it collects, uses and shares your information. Awareness includes reading and understanding these policies to make informed decisions about your data.
- **Privacy controls:** This refers to understanding what personal information you share, whether intentionally through postings or unintentionally through data collection, and knowing how to limit that sharing to protect your privacy.
- **Know your privacy settings:** most social networking platforms offer a set of privacy settings that allow you to control who can see your content, who can contact you, and how your data is used. Privacy awareness means regularly reviewing and adjusting these settings as needed.
- **Understanding data security:** It's important to understand how platforms protect your data and what you can do to improve that security, such as using strong passwords, enabling two-factor authentication, and being wary of third-party apps that can access your data.

- **Know your digital rights:** this includes knowing your rights relating to your personal data, such as the right to access your data, the right to correct inaccuracies and, in some jurisdictions, the right to have your data deleted.
- **Safe Sharing Policy:** This includes being cautious about what you share online and considering the potential consequences. Even seemingly innocuous information can be used to infer more about you than you might want to disclose.

Essentially, social media privacy awareness is about being an informed and cautious consumer who understands how personal data is handled in the digital sphere and takes proactive measures to protect it. With growing concerns about privacy and data security, this awareness is not just useful, but a necessity.

C. Ethical conduct: this includes compliance with laws and guidelines relating to issues such as copyright infringement, defamation and hate speech. It also means not using deceptive practices such as catfishing or spreading false information. Ethical conduct on social media refers to behaving online in a way that respects the rights, privacy and dignity of others, adheres to community standards, complies with applicable laws and promotes a positive digital environment. It includes understanding the potential consequences of actions in the digital sphere and making conscious and responsible choices. A deeper understanding of what ethical behavior on social media involves:

- **Respect for others:** this means treating everyone with kindness and respect, regardless of their race, religion, gender, age, nationality or political views. It also includes avoiding any form of harassment, discrimination or offensive comments.
- **Honesty and Openness:** Ethical behavior includes honesty and openness in your online interactions. This means not spreading false information, not creating fake profiles, and not impersonating someone you are not.
- **Privacy and confidentiality:** Respecting the privacy of others is an important aspect of ethical behavior. This means not sharing others' personal information without their consent, not posting pictures of others without permission, and respecting others' privacy settings.
- **Respect for Intellectual Property:** This includes respecting the intellectual property rights of others. You must not post copyrighted material without permission or attribute the content to its original creator.

- **Compliance with the Law:** Ethical conduct includes compliance with laws that apply to conduct on the Internet. This may include laws relating to defamation, harassment, privacy and copyright.
- **Preventing Cyberbullying:** Ethical behavior on social networks includes refraining from all forms of cyberbullying and taking action if you witness such behavior.
- **Responsible Sharing:** This involves considering the potential consequences before sharing something online, especially if it may be harmful, offensive or misleading. Responsible sharing also means checking facts before sharing information to prevent misinformation from spreading.

In essence, ethical behavior on social networks is more than just following the rules. It's about fostering a safe, respectful and honest digital environment. It involves considering not only what you might do online, but also what you should do based on the principles of respect, fairness and decency.

D. Digital Footprint Awareness: Responsible communication involves being aware that what you share online leaves a digital footprint that can have long-term consequences. It's important to think before you post, and consider how a post might affect your future or the future of others. Social media digital footprint awareness refers to understanding and being aware of the trail of information you leave behind as you use social media platforms. Every time you post a photo, update your status, like a post, or even log into a social network, you are creating a digital footprint that can be tracked, stored, and potentially used in a variety of ways. We offer some key components of digital footprint awareness:

- **Understanding the durability of online actions:** once something is shared online, it is almost impossible to delete it completely. Even if you delete a post, someone may have already taken a screenshot, or it may be stored on the platform's servers. Awareness means understanding this permanence and thinking carefully about what you share;
- **Awareness of the public nature of posts:** many social media posts are public or can be seen by a large number of people. Even with strict privacy settings, what you share can be screen captured or shared by others. Being aware means understanding that anything you post could potentially be seen by anyone;

- **Consider future implications:** what you share online can affect future opportunities and relationships. Many employers, colleges, and even romantic interests now check social networking profiles as part of their decision-making process;
- **Know your data collection practices:** Many social networks collect data about your behavior on the platform, such as what you like, share, or search. This data can be used for targeted advertising and other purposes. Awareness includes understanding these practices;
- **Awareness of privacy settings and laws:** Understanding the privacy settings of each platform and how they can be used to protect your information is an important part of digital footprint awareness. It also includes knowing the laws that protect your digital privacy;
- **Managing your digital reputation:** your digital footprint contributes to your online reputation. Regularly review your digital footprint and consider how it might appear to others.

Essentially, awareness of your digital footprint on social media is about understanding that your actions online have consequences, and managing your online behavior accordingly. It's about making informed decisions that help protect your privacy, your reputation and your future.

E. Critical Perception of Information: With the rise of "fake news" and misinformation, part of responsible communication is being a critical consumer of information. This includes checking facts before sharing information and considering the credibility of the source. Critical information consumption on social media refers to the ability to analyze and evaluate the information you encounter on these platforms. In an age where misinformation, fake news and biased content are widespread, it is critical to have the skills to distinguish reliable information from unreliable or misleading content. Listed here are some key components of critical social media perception:

- **Source assessment:** check the reliability of the source of the information. Is it a well-known news organization or a person with expertise in the field? Or is it an anonymous account or source with a history of spreading misinformation?
- **Verify the information:** check the facts and information with other reliable sources. If a piece of news or information is true, it was likely reported by multiple credible sources.

- **Identify bias:** Be aware that information may be presented in a biased manner, either intentionally or unintentionally. Try to recognize any potential bias and seek different perspectives to gain a balanced understanding.
- **Check data and context:** sometimes old news or images are shared as if they are up-to-date, or are shared out of context. Always check the date of the information and the context in which it was originally shared.
- **Evaluating consistency and reasoning:** Does the information make sense? Is it consistent with what you already know from reliable sources? If something seems off, it may be.
- **Careful consideration of images and videos:** Images and videos can be manipulated or shared out of context. Use reverse image search or fact-checking tools to verify their authenticity.

Basically, building a critical perception of information on social media means not taking information at face value, but researching and questioning it. This is an important skill in today's digital world where we are constantly bombarded with information and misinformation. It enables us to navigate the digital world safely and responsibly by making informed decisions based on reliable information.

F. Balancing online and offline life: Safe communication also means not letting social networks take over your life. It's important to balance online interactions with in-person and outdoor activities to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Balancing online and offline life on social media refers to the practice of managing time and attention between digital interactions and real-life experiences in a way that promotes overall well-being. With the increasing penetration of social media into our daily lives, achieving a healthy balance between our online activities and offline engagements has become more important than ever. Here are some key aspects of balancing online and offline life on social networks:

- **Time management:** This involves setting limits on the time spent on social networks to ensure that they do not interfere with other important activities such as work, study, exercise or sleep.
- **Quality relationships:** While online interactions can be enriching, they should not replace face-to-face relationships. Maintaining quality offline relationships and interactions is important for mental and emotional well-being.

- **Wise Use:** Use social networking for a specific purpose, not mindless scrolling. This can help make your time online more productive and limit unnecessary use.
- **Digital Detox:** Taking time away from digital devices on a regular basis can help reduce stress, improve focus and create more time for offline activities.
- **Real World Experiences:** Engage in activities that don't involve digital devices, such as reading a book, outdoor activities, or hobbies. These experiences can be refreshing and provide a valuable contrast to online activities.
- **Physical Health:** Excessive social media use can contribute to a sedentary lifestyle. Balancing online activities with regular exercise is important for maintaining good health.

Essentially, balancing online and offline life on social media is about careful and purposeful use of digital platforms. It's about ensuring that our engagement with social networks enhances rather than detracts from our lives. This helps to prevent problems such as internet addiction, promotes more diverse and rich life experiences and supports overall health and wellbeing.

G. Report and intervene: If you witness cyberbullying, harassment or any illegal activities, responsible communication requires you to report such incidents to the relevant social media platform or, if necessary, to law enforcement. Whistleblowing and social media intervention refers to the actions of identifying, reporting and addressing inappropriate or harmful content or behavior on these platforms. These actions are necessary to maintain the safety and integrity of the online community. Following are some key components of social media reporting and intervention:

- **Identifying inappropriate content or behavior:** This includes the ability to recognize content or behavior that violates the platform's community standards or the law. This may include hate speech, harassment, misinformation, explicit content or illegal activities.
- **Reporting to the Platform:** If you encounter inappropriate content or behavior, most social networks have a feature that allows you to report it to the platform. The platform will then review the content or behavior and take action according to its policies.

- **Block or Mute Users:** If a user consistently posts inappropriate content or has harmful behavior, you can protect yourself by blocking or muting them.
- **Intervene in cases of harm:** If you see someone being bullied or harassed, or if you see content that indicates someone may be in danger, intervene if it is safe to do so. This may include offering support to the person being bullied, confronting the person causing harm (if safe to do so), or reporting the situation to a trusted adult or the appropriate authorities.
- **Encouraging positive behavior:** reporting and intervening also includes encouraging positive behavior online, such as encouraging respectful discussions and sharing accurate information.

Essentially, social media reporting and intervention are about being an active and responsible member of the online community. It's not just about protecting yourself, but also looking out for others and helping to create a safer and more respectful digital environment. This is an important part of digital citizenship and a responsibility that all social media users should take seriously. At its core, safe and responsible social networking is about more than protecting yourself - it's about contributing to a positive, respectful and safe digital community. It requires awareness, critical thinking and respect for yourself and others.



PROGRAM 6: SAFE & POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

TRAINING METHODS AND ACTIONS

SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION TO POSITIVE ONLINE COMMUNICATION

Objective: To introduce young people to the importance of positive communication on social networks and encourage responsible and respectful interactions.

Engage participants in an icebreaker activity where they share positive experiences they have had on social media. Encourage them to reflect on how these experiences made them feel and why, they were positive.

Group discussion: Online communication scenarios (25 minutes): Present participants with different scenarios describing both positive and negative online communication situations. Divide participants into small groups and ask them to

discuss and analyses the scenarios. Encourage them to find ways to react positively in each situation.

Role play: Positive communication on social networks (30 minutes): In pairs, assign participants different roles to act out positive online communication scenarios. Provide them with prompts or scripts to guide their interactions. Allow time for reflection and group feedback after each role play.

Objective: Participants will engage in a simulated online conversation focused on empathy, respect, active listening, and constructive responses.

Introduction (5 minutes): Explain the purpose of the role-play exercise and how it relates to positive communication on social media. Remind participants of the importance of promoting positivity, understanding and respectful interactions online.

Role-play scenario (10 minutes): Provide participants with a role-play scenario that involves social networking interactions. Assign each participant a specific role and character name accordingly.

Characters: Alex posts a message on the social network expressing his passion for environmental protection and the need for collective action. Sarah, who is also passionate about the environment but has a different perspective, commented on the post, expressing her concerns about the feasibility of certain conservation methods.

Role-play (15 minutes): Give participants time to read and become familiar with their role. Encourage them to think about their character's perspective and desired outcome in the conversation. Participants should then engage in an online conversation in which they demonstrate positive communication skills such as active listening, empathy, respect, and constructive responses.

Group Discussion (15 minutes): After the role play, reassemble participants and facilitate a group discussion. Ask the following questions to encourage reflection and sharing:

- How did it feel to participate in the role play?
- What positive communication strategies did you use during the conversation?
- What challenges did you encounter and how did you deal with them?
- How did positive communication affect the interaction between the characters?

- What did you learn from this experience that you can apply to your online interactions in real life?

Feedback and suggestions (10 minutes): Encourage participants to provide constructive feedback to their colleagues. Participants can share their observations, offer suggestions for improvement, and highlight positive aspects of their peers' communication styles.

Role reversal (15 minutes): Invite participants to switch roles and repeat the role play scenario. This time they will adopt the perspective and characteristics of the opposite character. This allows participants to experience different perspectives and practice adapting their communication strategies accordingly.

Conclusion (5 minutes). Encourage participants to apply the skills and strategies they have learned to their online interactions in real life, promoting understanding, respect and constructive dialogue.

THE ABILITY TO SAY NO!

Activity: Presentation and discussion

Duration: 30 min.

Presentation (15 minutes): The ability to say "No" is a very important and difficult aspect of everyday life that many young people struggle with. Very often they are afraid to say NO for many reasons - fear of rejection, fear of disappointing, hurting, angering or offending someone, fear of appearing rude or rude in the eyes of others. The ability to say NO is a challenge that many people face on a daily basis. The lack of this ability can become a burden because the impulse to always say YES, even when we don't want to, is a sign of a problem with self-esteem and self-confidence. We confuse supposedly good behavior with other supposedly negative ones. It seems that refusing to do something is a rude and selfish act, while accepting is an act of kindness, generosity and empathy. Why is it so hard to say NO – because of:

- **Fear of rejection:** We want to be liked and accepted.
- **Respect for others:** Sometimes we just think that a person doesn't deserve no for an answer.
- **Fear of confrontation:** We want to avoid conflicts and maintain good relations. We don't want the relationship to suffer as a result of a negative response.

- **Guilt:** We often don't feel good after saying no. We constantly blame and punish ourselves for this decision, even if it was perfectly reasonable and justified.
- **Fear of missed opportunities:** We feel that if we say no now, it will deprive us of opportunities and things we like in the future.

Discussion (15 minutes): Encourage students to discuss when they had to say NO, but they didn't and why? Ask them to think about a way to do it in the future situation.

POSITIVE (ACCEPTING) COMMUNICATION

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 60 min.

Age of participants: 14-18 years

Description and Objectives: This activity is based on the presumption that a person, who recognizes and protects his own rights and those of others, is ready to listen to the point of view expressed by his interlocutor and express his disagreement with it, while showing full respect for him/her. In this way, negotiation is accepted as the only means of dealing with interpersonal conflicts that every person inevitably faces. The use of receptive communication aims to change the rules of the game: not conflict, but a democratic confrontation of ideas. The main objectives of this activity are participants:

- To gain an idea of how to use receptive communication to deal with everyday situations;
- To analyze which aspects of life are important and which are not;
- To learn to apply a positive approach to deal with negative moments in life;
- To acquire decision-making skills and successful conflict management.

Preparation: The group should line up in a circle. Each participant should be given a piece of paper on which some negative situation/ situation is described. Their job is to respond to these situations using positive communication.

Tips for the teacher: Before the activity, the teacher can prepare a poster with motivational lines and slogans such as "Let's say NO to the things that hurt young people". This could be the first of a series of slogans for the participants to display to the whole school after the activity is completed.

Advice for participants: All participants should familiarize themselves in advance with the main characteristics of verbal and non-verbal communication, as well

as with the specifics of positive (accepting) communication. The instructor can direct participants to appropriate sources of information on the topic.

Instructions:

- The teacher gives each participant pre-prepared materials.
- Everyone will have time to answer the questions anonymously.
- All participants stand in a circle and one by one read their answers to the rest of the class.
- The facilitator initiates a discussion about moral and ethical dilemmas. For example, are there good and bad lies? Is it bad to lie when we want to spare a friend or boyfriend's feelings or not?
- Remember that there are no right or wrong answers in negotiating values and non-formal education. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion. In particular, everyone has the right to express their opinion freely. A good measurable tool, however, is the question: Are we offending anyone else with it? Do we respect ourselves and others?

Evaluation of the activity: The following questions can be used to organize discussion and evaluation of the activity:

- How and when can we say "NO"?
- What are the important aspects of life?
- Why are we sometimes unable to say "NO"?
- What are the priorities in life?
- When we say NO, is it possible to maintain respect for ourselves and others?
- Can we figure out what we really want? Is what we want aligned with our values and attitudes?
- Do we know our "red lines" or situations, actions and values that are completely unacceptable? Have we declared them to others?

Another assessment activity could be for participants to make a poster with motivational quotes and aphorisms.

Negative situation	Positive/accepting communication
1. You are comfortably settled on the couch, and you are getting ready to watch a movie/series that you have been waiting for a long time. Suddenly your phone rings - your best friend is calling to complain about yet another scandal with her boyfriend. He wants to let off some steam, share the problem and get your	

support and understanding. Naturally, you want to listen to her and support her, but at the same time, you don't want to miss the movie/series that you have been waiting for a long time.

2. Your parents ask you to help your uncle with a very important job that requires you to be away from school for 3 days. Unfortunately, just during these 3 days, your classmates will organize many interesting art activities that you have been waiting for a long time.

3. One of your classmates constantly bullies and makes fun of you. You can't take the pressure anymore, and none of your other classmates are trying to protect you.

4. Your best friend always wants to copy your English homework. He/she is having difficulty in this subject, and you want to help him/her, but you don't think it is right for him/her to copy continuously and not make an effort.

IN MY HAND

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 60 minutes

Age of participants: 14-18 years

Description and objectives: This activity aims to give the participants an opportunity to share the negative aspects of their lives and everyday life. Fatigue and stress, combined with daily duties and responsibilities, have a very negative impact on people's lives and health. Unfortunately, stress is a common occurrence among people of all ages these days. The purpose of this activity is to teach the participants to define their negative emotions, fears and look for a solution to deal with them. This activity shows the importance of talking about frustrating situations and finding solutions to deal with them by sharing experiences with peers. The main objectives of this activity are participants:

- To get an idea of how important empathy and self-awareness are
- To improve their communication skills and interpersonal relations
- To learn how to manage their stress and emotions

Preparation: Participants should sit in a circle and the teacher should create a calm atmosphere by playing relaxing music.

Tips for the teacher: The teacher should also do the exercise. He/she will have two roles – participant and facilitator of the activity. It is important to bear in mind that some participants experience difficulties in expressing emotions and feelings, so they need to be properly encouraged. The activity can be used by a psychologist, social worker or during meetings to solve problems or conflicts. The tips of the fingers can be adapted to the specific situation - solving a conflict or vice versa - expressing positive emotions. The facilitator must be both the leader of the activity and a participant in it. It is important to recognize when it is necessary to help participants who are shy to express or explain their emotions. Sensing the general mood of the class and the relationships between participants, facilitators can ask only those who want to speak to speak. However, it would be nice if everyone talked about at least one of the "fingers". In larger classes, it is better to do this in small groups or in pairs, creating common descriptions. This helps avoid recognition of personal and intimate situations. This also reduces the risk of a particular student being ridiculed. This activity can also be used with younger participants, even those in kindergarten, replacing writing with drawing.

Instructions:

1. The group arranges itself in a circle
2. Each participant should put their hand on a piece of paper and outline it
3. On each of the fingers the following should be written:
 - On the little finger "effort"
 - On the ring finger "sadness"
 - On the middle finger "anger"
 - On the index "fear"
 - On the thumb "concern"
4. One by one, everyone should describe what it means to them to experience these specific emotions, which situations trigger them, and share ways to deal with these negative feelings.
5. Optionally, everyone shares with the rest of the group what the particular emotion means and what are the ways to deal with it.
6. After completing the activity, all the sheets should be put in the trash can as a symbol of dealing with negative emotions and throwing them out of the mind.

Evaluation of the activity: The following questions can be used to organize discussions and evaluate the activity:

- How did you feel as you expressed and described your emotions to the rest of the class?
- Was it easy for you to define your negative emotions?
- How did you feel while listening to the others?
- What conclusions did you draw from the experiences of others? What new did you learn?

THE 3 R'S

Activity: Self reflection

Duration: 20+ minutes

Age of participants: 14+

Description and objectives: The purpose of this activity is to improve the skills of participants to recognize and define the emotions that certain people and situations evoke in them, to develop tolerance and empathy; understand the relationships between causes and consequences, analyze negative situations and look for possible ways to solve them.

Preparation: The teacher must familiarize himself with the instructions for conducting the activity in advance.

Instructions:

1. Participants should be given a sheet of paper to fold in 4 so that 4 columns are obtained. The teacher should give them the following instructions: "In the first column, write the names of 10 people with whom you have daily contact.
2. In the second column, write 1-2 statements that express dissatisfaction/ resentment towards three of the people in column 1. (Resentment)
3. In the third column, you should try to describe what these people could do to stop having negative feelings towards them. You need to be clear and specific. (Requirements)
4. The fourth column is devoted to recognition/ acceptance. Discontent and demands can become more meaningful to the person to whom they are directed if you try to understand the reasons for his behavior and if you look for the positive side of the situation." (Recognition) After completing their task, participants can present some examples to the rest of the class. The teacher can have a discussion about whether the participants were able to express their feelings and emotions in a clear and structured way.

ANSWER TO ACCUSATION

Activity: Debate

Duration: 20+ minutes

Age of participants: 12-16 years

Description and objectives: People can have different reactions in response to an accusation: some avoid conflict, others approach aggressively. Knowing this, the facilitator can build a discussion by raising awareness of different ways to resolve conflicts peacefully. After completing this activity:

- Participants will learn how to control and manage their emotions in conflict situations;
- The purpose of the task is to divide the participants into two teams, according to the different reactions in the situation: those who support the peaceful resolution of the conflict and those who intensify the conflict by using aggressive methods. This will help the teacher to organize the debate and explain the advantages of the first solution.

Preparation: The teacher should read the instructions carefully in advance to familiarize himself with the method. The described situation is an example, the teacher can modify it or use a completely different example. The facilitator should not evaluate or correct participants' responses. The participants must find the best solution to the conflict themselves. Before giving the exact description of the situation, the participants can think of different conflict situations from their personal experience.

Instructions: The presenter should read aloud the beginning of the following story:

1. "Peter is walking very happily in the park when suddenly he sees Joro coming towards him. Joro has a very strange look and expression on his face. Peter wonders what is happening to him. They approach and greet each other, but Joro immediately starts screaming. He says that Peter has made him look very bad in front of the other youths in the neighborhood, that he is a bad friend, and blames him for everything that happens to him. Then Peter ... "
2. After listening to the story, each participant should think about how they would react in the situation in which Peter finds himself. Then everyone should share their answers with the class, and they should be classified

into two groups: those who seek a peaceful solution and those who encourage more conflict. The leader should organize a debate between the two groups and lead them to the conclusion that peaceful solutions to the conflict are better than aggression and confrontation.

Evaluation of the activity: The facilitator should explain that resentment is a completely normal emotion and serves to express anger or offense to other people! However, it is very important that they know how to show this resentment and deal with it without offending anyone. After the activity can organize a discussion.

Possible topics:

- How will the conflict escalate if aggressive solutions are used to resolve the situation? What will happen to Peter and Joro next?
- What would happen if peaceful methods were used? What would happen to Peter and Joro then?
- What could be the reason Joro is so angry with Peter? Is there a possibility that Joro misunderstood the situation?
- Have you had a similar situation in your life? Have you ever felt like Peter, or the other way around, that you've misunderstood someone?
- What are the most successful ways to resolve conflicts peacefully?

TOLERANCE AND NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

Activity: The Empathy Journey exercise-game

Duration: 60 min.

Introduction: Tolerance and non-violent communication on social media are critical to fostering respectful, inclusive and constructive online communities. They help reduce conflict and hostility, encourage different perspectives, and promote mutual understanding and empathy among users. Tolerant and non-violent social networking refers to practices that promote understanding, respect and peaceful interaction between users of different backgrounds, perspectives and experiences on digital platforms:

1. Tolerance in social networks involves respecting the rights and beliefs of others, even when they differ from one's own. This includes recognizing and appreciating the diversity of human experiences and perspectives and avoiding actions that discriminate, stereotype or marginalize others based on their identity or views.

2. Nonviolent social media communication involves expressing opinions in a way that promotes understanding, compassion, and constructive dialogue. This approach, often modeled on Marshall Rosenberg's principles of nonviolent communication, includes four key components:

- **Observation:** Clearly describing what you observe that affects your feelings or reactions without resorting to judgment, criticism or blame.
- **Feelings:** Expressing your own emotions and feelings about the situation.
- **Needs:** Identifying and expressing your needs or values that are related to your feelings.
- **Requests:** Making clear requests of others in a way that respects their autonomy and dignity, in order to meet identified needs.

Purpose: The Empathy Journey exercise-game aims to promote tolerance and strengthen non-violent communication skills among participants. By participating in interactive activities and discussions, players will develop a deeper understanding of empathy, compassion and the importance of peaceful dialogue in conflict resolution.

Materials:

- Flipchart or whiteboard with markers
- Index cards or sticky notes
- Timer or stopwatch
- Playing cards with different scenarios (prepared in advance)

Instructions: (10 minutes):

- Gather the participants in a circle and explain the purpose of the exercise-game: to develop empathy, tolerance and non-violent communication.
- Have a brief discussion about the definitions of empathy, tolerance and non-violent communication. Encourage participants to share their thoughts and experiences related to these concepts.
- Distribute the index cards or sticky notes and ask each participant to write a challenging scenario where empathy and non-violent communication are crucial.

Mapping Empathy (15 minutes):

- Collect the index cards or sticky notes with the scenarios from the participants.
- Present a script by reading it aloud to the group.
- Divide participants into pairs or small groups and instruct them to engage in “empathy mapping” of the scenario. They must share the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of all individuals involved in the situation.
- After 5 minutes, return participants to the larger group and encourage them to share their empathy maps.

Role play (20 minutes):

- Prepare cards to play different scenarios that involve conflicts or misunderstandings.
- Divide participants into teams of three to four members.
- Each team will take turns drawing a game card and playing the scenario. Team members must demonstrate tolerance and nonviolent communication skills during the role play.
- Set a time limit of 3-4 minutes for each role play.
- After each performance, allow other participants to offer constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Discussion (10 minutes):

- Lead a focused discussion about the challenges and benefits of practicing empathy and nonviolent communication.
- Encourage participants to share any personal insights or changes in their perspectives after participating in the game exercise.
- Lead the discussion on how these skills can be applied in your daily life, both personally and professionally.

Closure (5 minutes): Summarize the main takeaways from the game exercise, emphasizing the importance of empathy, tolerance and non-violent communication in promoting positive relationships and resolving conflicts peacefully.

EYSENCK PERSONALITY QUESTIONNAIRE

The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) is a widely used tool in psychology for assessing an individual's personality traits. It's a comprehensive model for studying human personality¹³⁴, according to which people are born with personality traits and are majorly influenced by genetics. Environmental, social & situational factors have minimal influence on traits. The EPQ was developed by Hans Jürgen Eysenck and Sybil B. G. Eysenck, two British psychologists who were interested in the biological basis of personality. They believed that personality is largely determined by genetics and that it can be measured by assessing people's responses to a set of questions about their behavior and feelings¹³⁵. The questionnaire is designed to measure three primary factors: Extraversion (E), Neuroticism (N), and Psychoticism (P).

Understanding the Dimensions:

Extraversion (E): This dimension measures the individual's level of sociability, assertiveness, and need for stimulation. Extraverts are sociable, thrill-seeking people. Typical extravert is well socialized, loves company; has many friends; likes to talk to people, doesn't like to read or sit alone. Craves strong experiences, seizes the moment; acts under the influence of momentary feelings, impulsive individual. Likes rude jokes, has a ready answer, likes change, carefree, easy to deal with, optimistic, likes to laugh and be cheerful. He prefers to move and do something, shows aggressive tendencies and easily loses his temper. His feelings are not well controlled, he is not the person who can always be counted on.

Neuroticism/Stability (N): It is based around stress tolerance. Neurotic people have more reactive nervous system & are anxious, quiet & reserved whereas Stable people are peaceful, remain calm, consistent, and thoughtful.

Introversion (E): Introverts are quite & reserve. They tend to be serious, averse to risk but reliable & better planned. Typical introvert is quiet, closed person, introspective, loves books more than people; reserved and disciplined, except for his intimate friends. Likes to look into the future, thinks before doing something; does not act on impulse. He does not like bustle, takes things seriously, likes a well-ordered lifestyle. Holds back his feelings, is rarely aggressive, does not lose his temper easily; he can be relied upon; is a bit pessimistic; very ethical.

Psychoticism/ Normality (P): This dimension relates to compassion & morality. A psychotic person can have anti-social traits like selfishness, hostility, and impulsivity.

N is closely related to the hereditary degree of lability of the nervous system. E is the degree of excitability of the central nervous system. **N** and **E** decrease with age. Females tended to have higher **N** than males and lower **E**. Workers – higher **N**. The urban one's higher **N** than **E**.

EYSENCK QUESTIONNAIRE (E.P.Q) KEY FOR PERSONALITY TYPOLOGY

(Bulgarian standardization, No background questions; 86 signs¹³⁶⁾

	Yes	No		
P Psychoticism	4, 15, 20, 24, 30, 33, 41, 45, 61, 68, 71, 74, 79, 86	2, 6, 10, 12, 34, 38, 51, 58, 66, 85	24 <i>the sign</i>	< 6 - there is no > 7 - expressed
E Extraversion	1, 5, 9, 13, 16, 23, 29, 37, 44, 48, 50, 54, 57, 65, 76, 78, 82	19, 27, 40	20 <i>the sign</i>	< 7 – pronounced introvert 6 – 16 norms > 16 – pronounced extra.
N Neuroticism	3, 7, 11, 14, 17, 21, 25, 28, 31, 35, 39, 42, 46, 52, 55, 59, 63, 67, 69, 72, 75, 80, 83	--	23 <i>the sign</i>	< 10 – none 10 – 18 norms > 18 - expressed
L A lie	18, 32, 53, 62, 64, 73, 84	8, 22, 26, 36, 43, 47, 49, 56, 60, 70, 77, 81	19 <i>the sign</i>	< 14 – authentic > 14 – invalid

Goal: The questionnaire is intended for the diagnosis of personality traits characterizing 5 types of personalities: emotionally stable extrovert; emotionally unstable neurotic extropies; emotionally stable introvert; emotionally unstable neurotic introvert; psychotic.

Data processing and interpretation of results: Quantitative data processing is performed on rocks specified in “key”. The calculation on the individual scales is done by counting the answers corresponding to “key”: in the answer column “Yes” – all answers that are positive; in the “No” – response column. Individual estimates are compared with the standards according to the table below, with

the normative interval calculated on the basis of the mean (ideal) norm + / - standard deviation.

NORMS 16 – 70 YEARS								
Gender	Psychoticism		Extraversion		Neuroticism		Lying	
	x	s	x	s	x	s	x	s
Men	3.78	2.94	12.76	4.33	9.69	5.09	8.73	4.02
Women	2.89	2.69	12.04	4.41	13.23	5.07	10.92	3.68

STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN 7 – 15 YEARS OLD								
Lying	Extroversion		Introversion		Emotional stability		Emotional instability	
High	Moderate	Significant	Moderate	Significant	Average	High	High	Very high
4 – 5	12 – 18	19 – 24	8 – 11	1 – 7	11 – 14	under 10	15 – 18	19 – 24

INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS:

The main dimensions: extroversion - introversion and emotional stability - neuroticism are related to some predominant personality characteristics:

Extroversion	Sociable, likes change and risk, impulsive and cheerful, optimistic, active, understated self-control and aggressiveness.
Introversion	Closed, introspective, reserved, distant, self-controlled, non-impulsive and non-aggressive.
Neuroticism (emotional lability)	Anxious, prone to depressive states, impressionable, emotionally reactive, difficult to adapt, prone to stress, sleep disorders, prone to psychosomatic manifestations.
Emotional stability	High threshold of emotional response, well-adapted, balanced and calm, difficult to give in to anxiety and stress, quickly regaining emotional balance after excitement.
Personality dimension of the Lie scale	With values above the average norm, it shows a tendency towards a pronounced social desirability (the person strongly wants to be liked and socially accepted).

As a result of the quantitative assessment on scales, data are obtained for 5 types of personalities, which are characterized by the following features of behavior¹³⁷:

Labile introvert	Depressed, anxious, rigid, restrained, unsociable, quiet, pessimistic, reflective (at high values hides prerequisites for reactive depression).
Labile extrovert	Offensive, restless, aggressive, impulsive, active, changeable, sensitive, optimistic (at high values, hides prerequisites for hysteria).
Stable introvert	Self-controlled, benevolent, peaceful, diligent, cool-headed, trusting
Stable Extrovert	Sociable, outgoing, talkative, responsive, easygoing, lively, carefree, leadership
Psychoticism	Lonely, aggressive, hostile, self-centered, cold, unempathetic, impulsive, original, unconventional, oblivious to danger (at high values: antisocial, prone to psychotic abnormal behavior).

TEST-ABILITY FOR SELF-CONTROL (M. SNIDER)

Introduction: The self-monitoring scale measures the extent to which an individual has the will and ability to modify how they are perceived by others. This test was developed by Mark Snyder (1974)¹³⁸. The proposed test allows to assess the degree of self-control in communication situations. According to the author, people with high communicative control constantly monitor themselves, know where and how to behave and know how to manage their emotions. At the same time, the spontaneity of self-expression is difficult for them. Such people do not like unpredictable situations. People with low communicative control are more direct and open and have more stable self-images.

Procedure: The test consists of items that could possibly apply to yourself that you must rate as true or false. Each item should be responded to quickly without over-thinking. The test should take no more than two minutes.

Key to assessment of results:

1 point each	For answer H for statements No. 1, 5 and 7
1 point each	For answer C for statements #2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10

Interpretation of the results obtained:

0-3 points: Low level of communicative control. Your behavior is stable and you do not find it necessary to change it according to the situation. You are capable of true self-disclosure in communication with other people. Some perceive you as "awkward in communication" because of your directness.

4-6 points: Average level of communicative control. You are sincere, but restrained in your emotional manifestations. You adjust your behavior to others.

7-10 points: High level of communicative control. You easily enter into a conversation, react flexibly to changes in the situation, feel good and can even predict the impression you create on others.

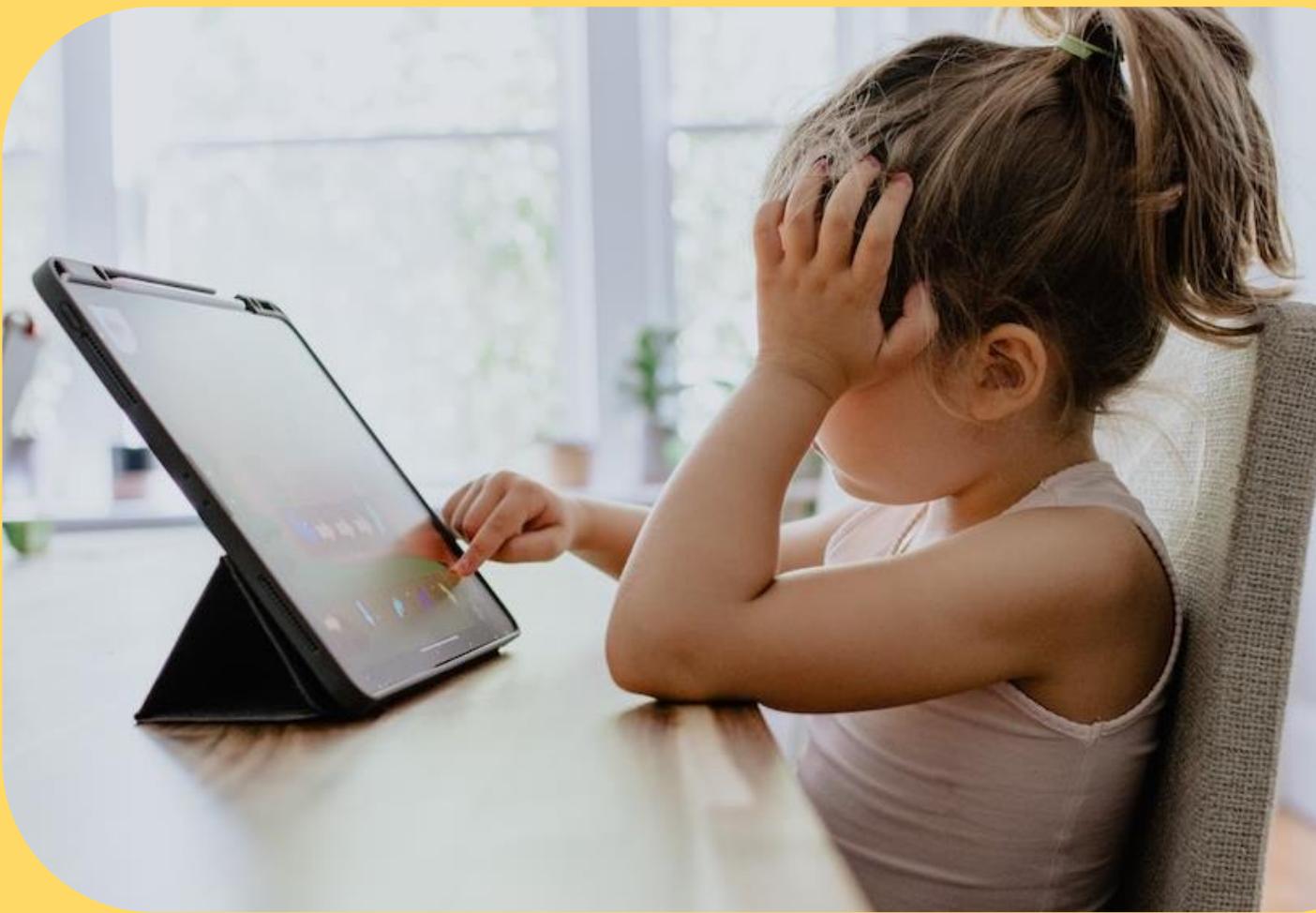
Questionnaire: Read the given statements carefully. Assess how each of them applies to you. If a given sentence is generally valid for you, mark it with B, if it is not valid, mark it with H.

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR
TEST-ABILITY OF SELF-CONTROL
BY MARK SNYDER**

No	Question	Validity	
1	It seems to me that imitating other is a difficult art	Valid	Not valid
2	And I can pretend to be a clown when I need to attract attention or entertain others	Valid	Not valid
3	I would make a good actor	Valid	Not valid
4	Sometimes people think that I experience things much more deeply than I actually do	Valid	Not valid
5	When I'm in company, I'm rarely the center of attention	Valid	Not valid
6	In different situations and in my communication with different people, I often behave in a completely different way	Valid	Not valid
7	I can only stand for what I am truly convinced of	Valid	Not valid
8	In order to succeed in my work and in my relationships with people, I try to be what they expect to see me	Valid	Not valid
9	I can be friendly even with people I can't stand	Valid	Not valid
10	I am not always what I seem	Valid	Not valid

PROGRAM 7:

ONLINE HARASSMENT



PROGRAM 7: ONLINE HARASSMENT

Social networks have made it much easier for us to communicate with family, friends and acquaintances, as well as to share experiences and inform others about our opinions and beliefs. These opinions and beliefs may be about global events or local affairs, politics or religion, interests, relationships, organizations, products, people, and a wide variety of other topics. Our conversations and comments can be narrowly focused or widespread to the point of going viral, depending on the topic.

Unfortunately, social networks are also widely used by those who abuse them, precisely for the reasons listed above. Many perpetrators "hide" behind the fact that they cannot be easily identified by doing what they would not allow themselves to say face to face, which may be considered a sign of weakness.

Online abuse comes in many forms and victims are not limited to public figures. They can work in any occupation, be of any age, gender, sexual orientation or social or ethnic background and live anywhere.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying can occur online alone or as part of general bullying. Cyberbullying can be from known or anonymous people. Like all bullies, they often try to convince others to join them. Cyberbullying generally consists of sending threatening or other unpleasant messages or other communications to people via social networking sites, gaming sites, text messages or e-mail, posting embarrassing or humiliating videos on hosting sites such as YouTube or Vimeo, or harassing by repeatedly sending text messages, instant messages or chats. Increasingly, it is done by posting or forwarding photos, videos or personal data obtained through sexting without the victim's permission. Some cyberbullies create Facebook pages and other social media accounts for the sole purpose of bullying others. The consequences of cyberbullying range from irritation and mild distress to - in the most extreme cases - self-harm and suicide. This can be a reality for vulnerable people or anyone who feels vulnerable due to cyberbullying or other personal circumstances.

Cyberbullying is an alarming trend that involves the use of digital platforms to harass, intimidate or humiliate others. The consequences of cyberbullying can be severe, affecting victims emotionally, mentally and even physically. Unlike traditional bullying, the online nature of cyberbullying allows perpetrators to remain anonymous, making it more difficult to identify and address the problem.

Preventive measures:

- Promoting digital empathy and respectful communication: Educate young people about the importance of treating others with kindness and empathy, both online and offline.
- Encourage open conversations: Create safe spaces for victims to share their experiences and seek support from friends, family or school authorities.
- Enforce strong social media policies: Social media platforms should actively enforce anti-cyberbullying policies and provide users with clear reporting mechanisms.

CYBER STALKING

Cyberstalking is persistent unwanted contact by another person - acquaintance or stranger. The motives of cyberstalks vary widely, including those who feel harmed by their target, ex-partners, those with inappropriate sexual motives, or those who simply enjoy scaring other, often random, people. They can take advantage of your digital footprint by hacking into your social media channels/apps to understand your every move, who you contact and what your plans are. As cyberstalks become more determined, they intrude into more aspects of your online presence, sometimes including hacking or taking over your social media accounts.

Cyberstalking can only take place online or as part of a more general act of stalking or harassment. In 2012 stalking was made a criminal offense in England and Wales.

How to avoid cyberstalking?

- Review what online information exists about you and minimize it.
- Change your e-mail and passwords for key online accounts regularly and keep them safe.
- Review all privacy and security settings of social networks and search engines.
- Avoid public forums.
- Make sure your computer and mobile devices have up-to-date internet security software installed and enabled.
- Make sure your wireless hub/router has security turned on.
- Do not send or receive personal information when using a public Wi-Fi network.
- Limit the personal and financial information you share online or offline.

TROLLING

Trolling, no different from cyberbullying, means intentionally upsetting, shocking or angering selected individuals, groups of people or a wider audience, who are usually people unknown to the troll. It usually causes offense as a result of the expression of extreme views or just because of its very nature. Racist, religious, homophobic, political or social slurs are common forms of trolling, but you can also fall victim to something as basic as the football team you support. It can also be directed against people - famous or not - known for their philanthropy, charity, altruism and other good qualities... by trolls who disagree with their motives.

CREEPING

"Crawling" means constantly following someone on social media by looking at their history, updates, conversations, photos/videos, profiles and friends. It can also include checking what people have written in other people's threads or retweeted. Creepers tend to hide the fact that they are creeping you by not inviting, commenting or responding on Facebook and other social networking platforms. Unlike cyberstalking, stalking behavior in itself is not harmful and does not constitute a crime.

DOXING

Doxing (sometimes spelled "doxing") is a type of harassment that occurs when someone obtains personal information about you — such as your real name, address, job, other personal information, health information, or financial information — and publishes it on the Internet without your consent.

HATE SPEECH & HATERS

The widespread problem of hate speech on social networks calls for a multifaceted strategy that involves everyone, from individual users to the platforms themselves. We present a comprehensive strategy to curb hate speech on social networks:

- 1. Raising awareness and training:** The first step involves raising awareness about what hate speech is and what its consequences are. This includes informing users about hate speech policies on each social network, as well as the societal and legal implications of engaging in or tolerating such behavior. This can be achieved through educational programs, seminars, webinars and podcasts.

2. **Promote positive online etiquette:** Users should be encouraged to practice and promote respectful and positive communication. This may include online campaigns, challenges or reward systems for users who consistently display positive behavior. Educators and influencers can play an important role in setting a good example of proper online etiquette.
3. **Victim support:** Victims of hate speech should be given the support they need. This can include resources for emotional support, guidance on legal assistance, and options for blocking and filtering offenders.
4. **Encourage legal action:** Laws and regulations must keep pace with the evolving digital landscape. Advocating for stronger legal sanctions against hate speech can deter individuals from engaging in such behavior. Cooperation with law enforcement can also ensure that serious cases are dealt with appropriately.
5. **Increasing digital literacy:** young people need to be informed about what hate speech is and how it can harm individuals and communities. Schools, parents and even social networks themselves need to take responsibility for increasing digital literacy and explaining the consequences of hate speech.
6. **Fostering empathy and understanding:** young people should be encouraged to show empathy and understanding. This means considering how words can affect others and refraining from sharing or participating in hate speech. Engaging in open conversations about diversity and respect can foster a greater sense of empathy.
7. **Use the internet safely:** Instruct young people how to use privacy settings and tools provided by social networks to protect themselves. This includes blocking, muting or reporting individuals who engage in hate speech. Young users should also be careful not to share personal information that could potentially be used against them.
8. **Reporting and documenting hate speech:** young people should be encouraged to report incidents of hate speech to the relevant social media platform or to a trusted adult. They should also know how to document instances of hate speech by taking screenshots or saving messages that can be used as evidence if the situation escalates.
9. **Seeking support:** young people need to know that they can seek support when faced with hate speech. This may be from parents, teachers or counsellors who can provide guidance and help. Many organizations also offer online resources and hotlines for young people experiencing online hate speech.

10. Positive online presence: young people should be encouraged to contribute positively to the online community. This can help balance the negativity of hate speech and promote a more respectful and understanding digital environment.

11. Advocating for change: young people have the power to advocate for change. They can support campaigns against online hate speech, contribute to online safety discussions and put pressure on social networks to take stronger action against hate speech.

It is important to remember that combating hate speech is a community effort. While these strategies can provide young people with tools to respond to hate speech, it is critical that parents, educators, and social networks work together to create a safer and more respectful online environment. Dealing with social media haters requires a balanced approach including emotional resilience, disengagement, using the tools of the platform, seeking support and promoting a positive online presence. While this can be a challenging part of navigating social media, it is an important aspect of developing digital literacy and online resilience. The growth of social networking has led to a unique challenge for young people - dealing with 'haters', people who constantly spread negativity or behave aggressively online. It is crucial that young people are equipped with strategies to deal effectively with such encounters. Here is a comprehensive strategy for young people to deal with social media haters:

- 1. Promote emotional resilience:** Help young people understand that online hate often says more about the hater than the person being targeted. Teaching emotional resilience can help them separate offensive comments from their own value and realize that these comments often stem from the hater's issues.
- 2. Encourage Non-Involvement:** Although the initial reaction may be to react defensively, often the most effective strategy is to not engage. Responding can give the haters the attention they seek and exacerbate the situation. Encourage young people to avoid responding to provocative comments.
- 3. Use profile blocking and mute features:** most social networks have features that allow users to block or mute other users. These can be particularly useful when dealing with haters. Blocking prevents the person from interacting with your posts or profile, and muting hides their comments from your view. Reporting and documenting: Encourage young people to report inappropriate behavior on the social networking platform. If they feel threatened or bullied, they should also consider

reporting it to a trusted adult or, if necessary, local authorities. Keeping a record of all hateful interactions can be helpful, especially if the situation escalates.

4. **Seek support:** Dealing with haters can be emotionally taxing. Young people need to be reminded that they can and should seek support when dealing with online hate. This support can come from parents, friends, teachers, counselors, or from online resources and hotlines that provide help in these situations.
5. **Practice Safe Sharing:** Encourage young people to think before they post and to be careful not to share personal information that could be used to harm them. Remind them to regularly review their privacy settings to control who can see their content.
6. **Cultivate a positive online presence:** encourage young people to focus on building a positive online presence. This can include sharing content that reflects their interests and values, respectfully engaging with others, and contributing to positive online communities. This not only helps to counteract the negative sentiment of haters, but can also provide a support network during difficult times.
7. **Promote empathy and kindness:** remind young people that they also have a role to play in making social media a more positive space. Encouraging empathy and kindness in their own online interactions can help set a standard for how they expect to be treated by others.

Dealing with hate speech include some practical steps:

- 1) The first step is learning about the definition and impact of hate speech. This understanding will facilitate the identification and reporting of such incidents.
- 2) Don't get involved. It is usually best not to engage with the perpetrator.
- 3) Report and block: If they encounter hate speech, they should report it immediately to the social media platform. It is also advisable to block users who consistently engage in such behavior.
- 4) Seek support: encourage them to talk to an adult they trust if they are affected by hate speech. They need to know that they are not alone and that there are resources and people who can help them.

Dealing with the haters include following steps:

- 1) Help them understand that negative comments from haters often reflect the haters' own insecurities, not the value of the person they are directed at.
- 2) Ignoring or blocking: Ignoring haters often takes away their power as they thrive on the reactions. If the hater persists, using the block feature can protect them from further negative backlash.
- 3) Report.
- 4) Build a positive online environment.



PROGRAM 7: ONLINE HARASSMENT TRAINING METHODS AND ACTIONS

CAN I PROTECT MYSELF?

The training begins with a discussion of what cyberbullying is and the potential impact it can have on people. Questions for discussion:

- What do you think bullying is?
- What is psychological bullying?
- Give examples of cyberbullying
- Where is the difference between play and bullying?

Divide participants into small groups or pairs. Provide each group with a scenario/case study involving cyberbullying. Instruct each group to analyze the scenario and discuss the following questions:

- How would they define cyberbullying behavior in the scenario?
- What are the potential consequences of cyberbullying for the victim?
- How might the victim feel in this situation?
- How would they personally feel if they were a victim or witness to this cyberbullying incident?
- What are some ways a victim might respond to cyberbullying?
- How can bystanders support the victim and deal with cyberbullying?
- What actions can the online community or platform take to prevent and address cyberbullying?

After the group discussions, bring the participants back together and ask each group to share their scenario and the takeaways they got from the discussion. Each group writes their strategies on a flip chart and discusses with the whole group. Finally, create a collective list of effective responses to cyberbullying on a flipchart.

CASE STUDY №1

Iva and Dora met on the internet and have been talking for a few days. Dora has told Iva many things about herself - where she lives, how old she is, which school she goes to and has sent a picture of herself. Dora asks Iva how old she is and which city she lives in. Is it safe for Iva to answer her? Why? Could one of the girls fall victim to cyberbullying? Give a reasoned answer.

CASE STUDY №2

Pavlin receives a message that he has been randomly selected to win a free MacBook. He doesn't recall entering any contests, but is very happy about his luck. He will receive his winnings if he sends his address and phone number. Delivery is by courier service to his home. Should Pavlin agree to give out this information? Why? Could he be the victim of cyberbullying? Give a reasoned answer.

CASE STUDY №3

Todor and Peter are working on a joint homework project. Peter wants to send Todor the materials he has collected, but has neglected to ask for his email address. Peter cannot reach Todor by phone, but contacts his friend Stanislava and asks her to give him Todor's email. Should Stanislava tell him? Why? Could one of the boys fall victim to cyberbullying? Give a reasoned answer.

CASE STUDY №4

Ivan communicates via Skype with a new friend he met on the Internet. The friend asks him for his phone number to tell him something important later. Is it okay for Ivan to give it to him? Why? Could he be the victim of cyberbullying? Give a reasoned answer.

CASE STUDY №5

Sonja and Darina have been friends for five months on the Internet, where they met. They found out that they are the same age, have the same interests and live in the same neighborhood. Sonja suggests that they meet and go for a walk in the park. Does Darina agree? Why? Could one of the girls fall victim to cyberbullying? Give a reasoned answer.

HOW CAN I IDENTIFY CYBERBULLYING AND PROTECT MYSELF FROM IT?

Activity: Brainstorming

Duration: 30 min.

The technique is often used in large groups to quickly gather many ideas on a topic/question. You can divide the young people into 2-3 large groups or work with the whole class. Each group is given a flipchart to record the different types of violence and bullying. The focus is to give as many examples as possible, not

paying as much attention to whether they are really about the topic. Then, based on sharing the examples with the group and discussing them, the definitions can be drawn out and the causes and consequences for participants of this type of behavior can be discussed.

Objective: They will learn about the main forms of cyberbullying. They will learn the consequences of bullying and cyberbullying and why they should be targeted. They will learn the signs that indicate a child may be a victim of cyberbullying. They will suggest specific solutions for dealing with a cyberbullying situation.

Results:

- Analyze what is bullying and cyberbullying
- Learn to show empathy for victims of cyberbullying
- They will offer solutions on how to help others when bullying occurs

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO ASSERT YOUR "ME" AND BE BRAVE?

Activity: Q&A discussion

Duration: 20 min.

The definition of cyberbullying - using digital media such as the internet and mobile phones to deliberately upset and annoy someone. How can we show courage when someone is being cyberbullied and you are a witness? Give your own view on bullying and cyberbullying.

Possible answers:

- Being able to stand up to;
- To have courage; To stand up for others;
- To stand up to others when you think you are right;
- Advocating for the bullied;
- You empathize with bullies;
- You seek support from an adult;
- You take steps to preserve the evidence in order to come to a resolution.

WHAT ARE BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 15 min.

Ask questions about the types of aggression. Divide students in groups and let them check online for possible answers. The winner is the group with most answers. Possible answers about types of aggression include:

Physical - these are the well-known hitting, kicking, punching, slapping etc. - all forms of visible violence. This also includes breaking and damaging personal belongings.

Verbal - we incorrectly take this form to be milder and usually do not take it seriously. It includes insults, taunts, sexual innuendo and innuendo, name calling, threatening, 'joking' i.e. these are ways of hurting someone by making them feel bad about what we are saying to them. The form is also typical of cyberbullying.

Indirect - most people don't even realize this form exists, and it is no less hurtful than the others. It involves turning others against the victim, talking behind their back and spreading rumors, spoiling their relationships with people close to them, putting someone in social isolation

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying is harassment perpetrated through the means of electronic communication technologies - the Internet and mobile phones. It can be found under different names:

- E-bullying;
- electronic bullying;
- cyberviolence;
- digital bullying;
- online bullying.

HOW DO WE RECOGNIZE A PEER IS EXPERIENCING BULLYING?

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 10 min.

- The child is irritable, has disturbed sleep, lacks appetite
- His contact with other children is reduced
- Change usual route to and from school
- Late to and from school

- Runs away from classes
- Distracted, nervous

Signs that a child is a victim of cyberbullying:

- Abrupt change in mood after using the Internet. The child may seem upset, nervous or scared
- Sudden stoppage of a computer or Internet program
- Complete unwillingness of the child to discuss even generally what he/she has talked about with others or what others have written about him/her in chat rooms, social networking (Facebook), etc. and the child shutting down after being on the Internet.
- Someone calls on the phone and the child suddenly hangs up, often without having said anything
- Seems moody, nervous or scared after calling or receiving a message on their phone. Sometimes it may involve very fast and furious rubbing of a message on their phone.
- When he receives a message, he approaches it cautiously and even fearfully even before he has read it.

DON'T FEED THE TROLL¹³⁹

Activity: Presentation

Duration: 20 min.

Introduction: You might think winning or losing relies on whether you “win the argument”. But for a troll, winning or losing is about how many people see their propaganda. They don’t have to convert many of your followers to increase their numbers substantially. When a troll targets you for abuse, block them immediately; this will ensure that they cannot tweet at you ever again, and removes mentions of them from your notifications. It is remarkable how few people you actually have to block to stop a troll storm in its tracks. Furthermore, it will stop their small networks from being able to target you again in future. If you receive several tweets in a short period of time, temporarily switch off app notifications on your mobile devices; this will protect you from unplanned exposure to troll hate. Do not post saying that you are being targeted; this will simply invite further abuse and sympathy, all of which raises troll content up in prominence. A troll storm is unpleasant. Even after blocking abuse and switching off notifications, you will still have to deal with having been abused in the first

place. It is important to get space from social media and show yourself some compassion. They attack you because they are trying to exploit your achievements and the number of normal people who take an interest in what you do and say on social media. Dealing with trolls include:

- **Record** - If you feel a message, you have received is defamatory or might contain criminal content, e.g. incitement of violence or harassment; or content that glorifies terror, then record it. The best way to do this is to take a screenshot. Make sure to capture the time, date and sender.
- **Report** - Posts can be reported to the social media company directly from the interface. Do so; these platforms will often prioritize complaints coming from public figures. If the content is potentially criminal, then keep a record and seek advice on whether and how to report it to the police or to discuss it with a defamation lawyer. If you need advice get in touch with an expert.
- **Recruit Help** - Finally, you are not on your own. There are organizations with experience and expertise in online hate, social media tactics and trolling who are there to help. You can contact anti-hate organizations directly or, without referencing the trolls' propaganda, share anti-hate material as a way of ensuring your followers are exposed to arguments for tolerance.

DANGERS OF CYBERBULLYING

Activity: Practical exercises

Duration: Approximately 60 minutes

Objective: The objective is to familiarize participants with the dangers of cyberbullying, while providing them with practical strategies to prevent and deal with these issues.

Materials:

- Presentation slides or handouts on cyberbullying, phishing and privacy protection in social networks.
- Flipchart or whiteboard with markers.
- Devices with internet access for research (optional).

Instructions: Introduction (5 minutes):

- Start by introducing the topics of cyberbullying, phishing and privacy in social networks.

- Explain the importance of these issues and how they can affect people's online well-being.
- Create respectful and inclusive discussion during training.

Understanding Cyberbullying (15 minutes):

- Present a brief overview of cyberbullying, including specific examples of cyberbullying cases.
- Discuss the emotional and psychological impact cyberbullying can have on victims.
- Facilitate a group discussion about the signs of cyberbullying and how it differs from traditional bullying.
- Encourage participants to share their experiences or observations regarding cyberbullying.

Prevention and response strategies (10 minutes):

- Brainstorm to generate strategies to prevent cyberbullying and phishing incidents.
- Encourage participants to share tips for promoting a positive online environment and reporting harmful content.
- Discuss the steps people should take if they encounter cyberbullying or phishing attempts.
- Provide information on how to report cyberbullying incidents to relevant authorities and social media platforms.

Q&A and summary (5 minutes):

- Give participants the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification on all topics discussed.
- Summarize the key takeaways from the learning, emphasizing the importance of vigilance, empathy and responsible digital citizenship.

Preventive measures:

- Adjust privacy settings: Encourage users to regularly review and update their privacy settings to limit the amount of personal information visible to others and third-party applications.
- Think before you share: Remind people to be cautious about sharing sensitive information on social networks, including addresses, phone numbers and financial data.
- Read the terms and conditions: Encourage users to read and understand the terms and conditions of social networking platforms, making sure they are aware of how their data is used and shared.

In conclusion, cyberbullying, phishing, and misuse of personal data on social networks are critical issues that require attention from individuals, parents, and educators. By promoting digital literacy, encouraging responsible online behavior and implementing preventative measures, a safer and safer digital environment can be created for all.

ONLINE NEGATIVITY MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Activity: workshop

Duration: 30 min.

Purpose: To provide participants with effective strategies for coping with online negativity and cyberbullying.

Instructions:

1. Begin the workshop by discussing common experiences of online negativity and cyberbullying that young people may encounter on social media.
2. Present different coping strategies, such as blocking or reporting abusive accounts, disconnecting from social networks, or seeking support from trusted adults.
3. Divide participants into small groups and assign each group a different online negative scenario (e.g., receiving an abusive comment, witnessing cyberbullying).
4. Ask each group to role-play a scenario and practice using the coping strategies discussed during the workshop.
5. After the role-plays, have a debriefing session in which participants share their experiences and discuss the effectiveness of different coping strategies.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGE TO BUILD EMPATHY

Activity: group work with discussion

Duration: 2 days

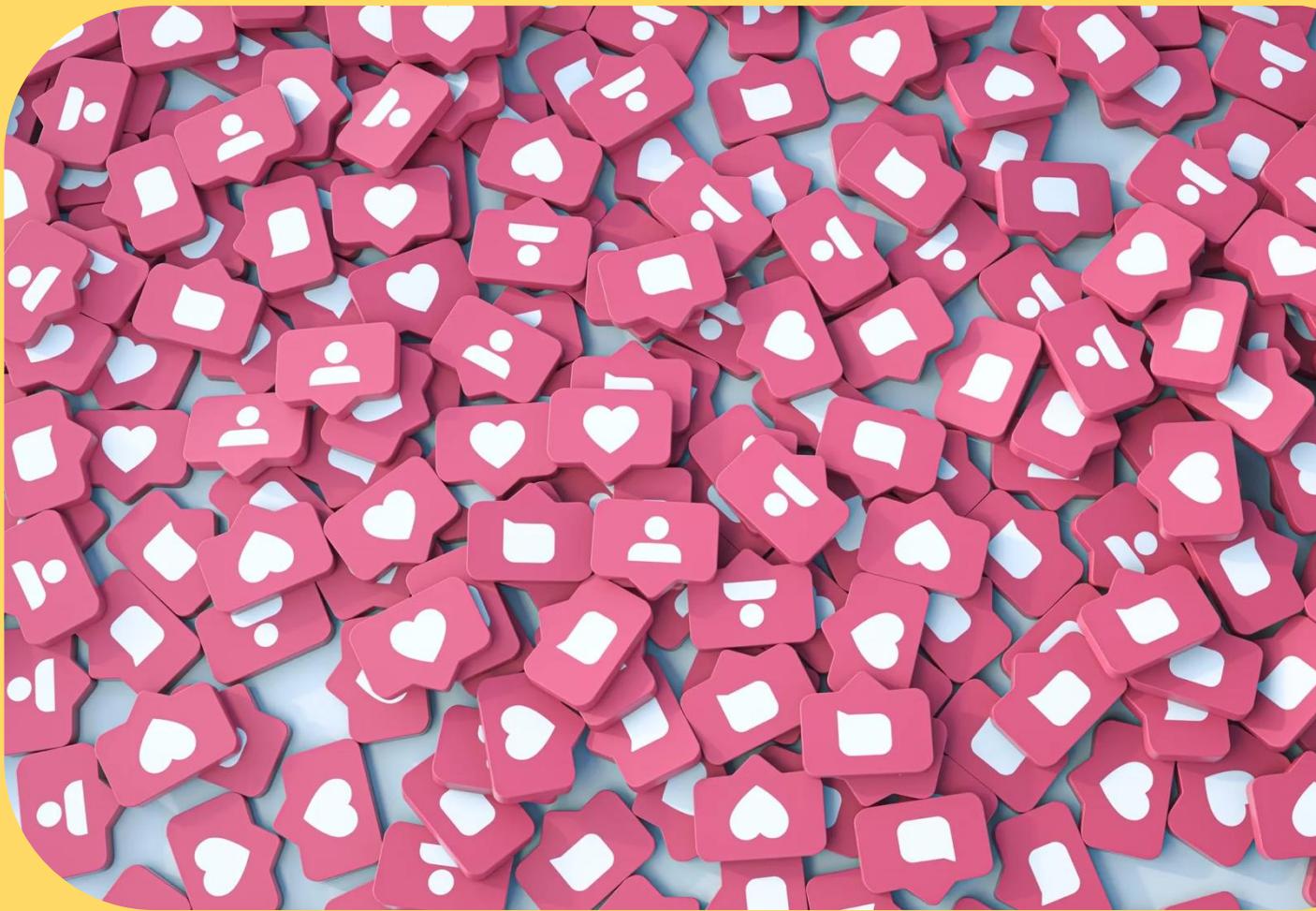
Aim: To foster empathy and understanding among participants by experiencing social networks from different perspectives.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into pairs or small groups and ask each group to choose a social media platform they frequently use.
2. Instruct each group to temporarily swap their social media accounts. For example, if one member uses Instagram, they will provide their login details to their partner or group members.
3. During the exchange period (e.g., 24 hours), participants will navigate and interact with the social networking platform as the account owner.
4. After the exchange period, gather participants and facilitate a group discussion where they share their experiences, emotions, and insights gained from using someone's social networking account.
5. Discuss how the exercise has influenced their perception of online interactions, empathy for others' experiences, and the potential impact of their own social networking behavior on the well-being of others.

PROGRAM 8:

DIGITAL REPUTATION & DIGITAL IMAGE



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PROGRAM 8: DIGITAL REPUTATION & DIGITAL IMAGE

Digital reputation

Your digital reputation is the digital footprint created by all the things you say and do online, as well as what others post about you. The people and sites you follow, the content you post, like or share, the comments you make, and what you're tagged in all contribute to your digital reputation. Your digital reputation can affect your friendships, relationships and even your job prospects for the rest of your life, so it's important to be careful about how you are seen online¹⁴⁰.

How is the Digital Footprint Left? ¹⁴¹

Every time we browse the web, click on a link, or even make an online purchase, we leave a digital footprint. These actions, often carried out without much thought, contribute to a digital profile that can be viewed and analyzed by others, including companies, advertisers, and in some cases, malicious actors. Understanding how our digital footprint is formed is crucial for protecting our privacy and security online.

How does my digital reputation affect a person?

Once something is online it can be very difficult to remove. This means it may be seen any time in the future, by people you don't even know yet. Being online also means the content can be easily and quickly shared. Words and images can be misinterpreted and altered, or something intended for your small group of friends can create issues when shared with others outside the group. It's important to consider how you manage your own posts, messages, images and videos, as well as any that others post about you. Tagged photos, blogposts and social media interactions all shape how others think of you, now and in the future. Your privacy settings on social media sites help control what others can see of your online life, but they do not protect you completely¹⁴².

Digital reputation protection actions¹⁴³:

1. **Stop and think** about any content before you post or send it – would you be comfortable with a potential employer seeing it?
2. **Treat others respectfully** online, as you would like to be treated.
3. **Adjust your privacy settings** so things you don't want to be public don't appear online. For example, you could limit access to your posts so only close friends see them. It's also a good idea to regularly check that your

settings are still right. The advice is to change privacy settings for different social media apps, games and other online platforms.

4. **Remove the tag or mention** if you're uncomfortable about anything others have posted. If you can't do this yourself, ask the person who posted it to un-tag you, edit you out or take it down.
5. **Search your name and image regularly**, to make sure what's online is OK. Remove anything you no longer think is appropriate, if it's from your own account or site – if you have forgotten the security details for an old account, the service or platform may be able to help you, if you can provide information to verify your identity. If someone else controls the account or site, you may be able to ask the person (or organisation) to remove it.

What is a digital footprint?¹⁴⁴

The internet can be a great place for forming connections or new ideas. It also remembers more about you than you might expect. That means some of the things you post or engage with can resurface when you least expect them. Internet experts call this trail of data your “digital footprint”. Your digital footprint can include anything from old photos to comments on public posts, and it can be one of the first things people experience of you online. The good news is, there are plenty of ways you can manage your digital footprint to make it match with the image of yourself you'd like to present.

How to manage your digital footprint?¹⁴⁵

- **Check what's out there** - googling your name will let you see what people, like your potential employers or friends, can find out about you. This can be anything from your local sport club making a post about your team on social media, to your own personal online accounts you have used, both currently and in the past.
- **Get posts/photos/videos taken down** - if there are posts that you don't want people to find online, try asking the people who created them to take them down. If you or a friend have forgotten the details to an old account, it's still worth contacting the platform with identifying data and asking for their help.
- **Check your privacy settings** - if you're surprised by what you find about yourself online, it's a good time to change your privacy settings.

- **Set boundaries on tagging** - if you don't want to be tagged in a photo or post you're uncomfortable with, you can un-tag yourself or ignore a tag request.
- **Think before you engage** - the things you like at 17 may not be what you like when you're 24. Before you engage with a post or page, ask yourself if what you're doing is something you want to be associated with long-term. You may like a page as a joke, but it's good to remember: others may not see the funny side.

Digital image

Digital image (identity) and digital reputation are closely related, but they are not the same thing¹⁴⁶.

The digital image is the set of information that we ourselves generate on the Internet through the content that we create and control. Aspects such as the design of our websites, the appearance of our social networks and the tone we use to send your messages affect our digital identity. A person can create digital identity on the different platforms in which the person participates - website, blog, social networks, etc. Taking care of your image and the relationship with your users on each of them is fundamental and can positively affect your digital reputation.

Digital reputation is the opinion that the online community has of a person and which is expressed through comments on different platforms or reviews, whether positive or negative. It depends on the digital footprint we leave. This means that it refers to the trail of information we inadvertently leave when using the Internet. This includes data collected by cookies, search histories, and online activity logs. Unlike digital identity, which is actively created, the digital footprint accumulates passively, often without the explicit knowledge of the user¹⁴⁷.

Digital image is the sum of all personal information and data that a person chooses to share on the Internet. This information can range from something as simple as a username to more complex details like browsing histories, personal preferences, and social media activity. Digital image is, in essence, the online representation of oneself, a digital projection of our personality, interests, and behaviors. Configuring a digital image involves more than just registering on websites or posting on social networks. **It is a continuous process of building and maintaining an online presence** that accurately reflects who we are and how we want to be perceived. From the choice of photos, we share to the

opinions we express – every action contributes to the narrative of our digital image¹⁴⁸.

Differences Between Digital image and Digital reputation

Understanding **the difference between digital image and digital reputation** is key to a safe and conscious online presence¹⁴⁹ (see table below):

Table 4. Differences between digital image and digital reputation¹⁵⁰

Feature	DIGITAL IMAGE	DIGITAL REPUTATION
Origin	Actively created by the user	Passively generated through online actions
Control	Controlled by the user	Often accumulates without the user's knowledge
Awareness	Requires conscious and deliberate action	Forms without explicit intent
Content	Information chosen to share publicly	Automatically accumulated details, including habits and preferences
Management	Managed through privacy settings and conscious decisions	Requires understanding of online security and constant vigilance
Impact	Affects online perception and reputation	Has implications for long-term privacy and security

This table offers a clear and concise view of how image and digital reputation differ in terms of their formation, management, and the impact they have on our digital life. Understanding these differences is essential for effectively managing our online presence, protecting both our image and our personal information.



PROGRAM 8: DIGITAL REPUTATION & DIGITAL IMAGE

TRAINING METHODS AND ACTIONS

DIGITAL IDENTITY¹⁵¹

Introduction: When we talk about identity, it is about who you are – your personality, your beliefs and values, your skills, your interests, and hobbies. But remember, we also have an identity online – a digital identity.

Instructions: Take two minutes to make a list of the top 10 things that represent your identity. Do this individually. You will not have to share these items with the group. Now with a partner, how many of the items you listed would you be okay sharing with your friends [put an F next to those], a teacher/employer/boss [put a X next to those], a stranger [put an S next to those]? All of the information you enter, post, and share while you are on the internet helps form your digital identity. If you shared this list of 10 things online, it is important to remember that any of the items that you listed on your identity list could end up online.

Whole Group Discussion [10 minutes]: Learners will consider how publicly available online information helps form others' opinions about them.

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: In your small groups come up with three things that could form a digital identity and write them down on a lined sheet of paper. This could include things that you post or share online like news stories, memes, text-based posts, etc. It could also include the information you choose to share about yourself online (e.g., your social media profiles, phone number, etc.).

TEACHER'S NOTE: Allow groups five minutes to think through and discuss. Then bring the group back together to discuss as a class.

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: Every time you go on the internet and post something or enter information, you leave a mark. It's like when you walk in dirt or mud — you can see your footprint and you are leaving tracks behind you. Sometimes, these tracks cannot be erased. This means any behavior online leaves a mark depending on how you manage your information.

Class Interaction [15 minutes]: Learners will consider what information they want to appear when someone searches for their name.

TEACHER'S NOTE: Introduce students to Angela (a fake persona).

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: Say hi to Zeina! Zeina just joined the online world. Our goal is to help her on her online journey. Let's get to know Zeina.

TEACHER'S NOTE: Write this information below on the board:

- She is 19 years old, and she is studying to be a nurse.
- She is from Cairo and she loves karaoke.
- Her family raised her and her brother Rami. They are very close since he is only 2 years younger than her.
- In her free time, she loves to watch movies.

The names and the examples can be further localized to reflect common names and situations in the area you are teaching. The goal of this example is to teach students what makes up a digital identity and discover how basic information about someone's personality can translate into the digital world.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS: Zeina also has an identity online — a digital identity. What do you think that might look like? Remember, what she will choose to do online (i.e. share, post) or anything that she will put on the internet — will form her digital identity.

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: In your small group take five minutes to make a list of all the things that Zeina might be doing online based on the information you know so far. Write your responses on a sheet of paper. We will come back together to discuss as a class.

Potential Answers:

- Researching Nursing Jobs
- Places (Restaurants) to Sing Karaoke
- Birthday or Holiday Presents for her Brother
- Local Movie Showings or Theater Showtimes
- Movies Trending on Netflix
- Film Festivals

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- Why is it important to keep your digital identity safe? Imagine that all of the information you have just listed for Zeina is stored in a physical file and imagine other people could look at that file.
- Would you make different choices if you knew your movements were not private?

TEACHER'S NOTE: Provide time for students to respond.

Class Interaction [15 minutes]: Learners will consider what information they want to appear when someone searches for their name.

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: What should you share about yourself online and what you would keep private? The first step is to identify the people that you usually engage with or can access your information. With your small groups take two minutes and consider the following:

- Would you tell your friends your name?
- Would you tell your friends your address?
- Would you tell your friends your secrets?

Now, let's think about other people you see often and ask yourself the following questions. With your small groups take two minutes and consider the following:

- Would you stand in front of a class or office — where you know some people, but not everyone — and tell them your name?
- Would you tell them your date of birth?
- Would you tell them your address?

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: Finally, think about how you personally are using the internet. With your small groups, reflect on what information you share and consider if your posts could hurt others, be misinterpreted, or harm your reputation — or someone else's.

TEACHER'S NOTE: Allow students eight minutes to think through and discuss. Then bring the group back together for a two-minute whole group discussion.

Takeaways [10 minutes]

Recap the lesson with these points.

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: When considering what to share online consider your values and audience, as it may help you more easily determine the information you feel comfortable sharing and what to not share with others. With new technologies today, publicly available online information can grow very quickly to new audiences and form others' opinions about you. Consider what private information you want to appear online when someone searches for your name — especially embarrassing information. Once this type of information is online, it can be very challenging to control who sees this content. Whenever you share information online (even just directly with one person, like in a text or private message), you should be prepared for the possibility that it may spread well beyond the audience you intended to reach. Another reason to think about your digital identity is that some of the information you post online can be publicly

available through online searches. This could include images, social media accounts, your school, your job and employer, news stories, and your community or social groups. People you meet could use search engines to obtain more information about you. What they find, good or bad, is going to impact what they think about you. If you want to be able to have control over how they perceive you, it is important for you to know what information they are likely to see. These people include future employers and school, college, or university admissions officers. Admissions officers may not inform applicants whether or not they looked them up online and/or used the information to make their decision.

Optional Activity: If learners feel comfortable, ask them to search their name in an online search engine or as a class you can decide on a celebrity to search in an online search engine.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- What did you find?
- Were you surprised by the information that appeared?
- Do lots of other people have the same name as you?
- What impression might someone who doesn't know you develop upon seeing these results?

TEACHER'S NOTE: Allow 10-15 minutes to discuss as a class.

DIGITAL FOOTPRINT AWARENESS

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 20 min.

Introduction: The Internet is a very powerful tool used by billions of people every second of the day. We can now communicate very easily with people that are halfway across the world just by the click of a button. While access to information, forums, chat rooms, gaming groups, social networks, shopping and emails is so easy by using a variety of different devices, the need for us to be aware of what is happening when we use the Internet is becoming increasingly important. When we walk across mud, snow or sand we leave footprints that are visible. The same applies when we use the Internet – we leave a digital footprint trail. Every click, every post, every submit leaves a trace. As soon as you post something online it is available for other users to do with it what they want. Even with the best privacy settings, you are no longer in control of the information once you have posted it. Other users can save it, share it, comment on it or use it in a negative way against you. Once it is on the World Wide Web it is potentially

there forever. Even if you delete a post, remove a picture or a comment they will still be present on a server somewhere.

Questions to the students:

1. Do you know what footprint you have?
2. Have you ever posted anything that you are now ashamed of?
3. Do you know how to check your real footprint online?

RESEARCHING YOUR REPUTATION

Part 1

CLASS INTERACTION: The teacher chooses a public figure (e.g., someone in the music/film/TV industry, political figure, business leader) who will be familiar to the students. Look up the person's name on an online search engine and, with students, examine a few of the items that come up (please project search results on a screen). Also, explore the public figure's social media presence. After spending a few minutes exploring, ask two students to act out a hypothetical interaction between the public figure and a fan.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- How does it feel encountering someone who knows a lot of information about you?
- How would you feel if that information was incorrect?
- How many people can access this information?
- How can you control what information about you is available online?

Part 2

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: People you meet will use search engines to obtain more information about you. What they find, good or bad, is going to impact what they think about you. If you want to be able to have control over how they perceive you, it is important for you to know what information they are likely to see. These people include future employers and school/ college/university admissions officers. Admissions officers and employers may not inform applicants of whether they looked them up online and/or used the information they found online to help make admissions or employment decisions.

Part 3

CLASS INTERACTION: Organize students into pairs.

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: Brainstorm three things you would want to come up when someone searches for your name online. How likely do you think it is that these things will actually appear in the search results? Share with your partner.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- What did you and your partner come up with?
- Raise your hand if you have searched for your name online. What did you see? What photos come up? Were you able to find information about yourself, or are there other people in the world who share your name?

TEACHER'S NOTE: If they have a common name, ask students to add a piece of information to their searches, such as their hometown or their school's name. You can also ask students to Google themselves/search for their name online during this activity if computers or mobile devices with internet access are available.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS: When you search for your name online, ask these four questions:

- What are the first few results?
- Are you comfortable with this information?
- What do the other results suggest about who you are as a person? As a student? As an employee?
- What impression might someone who doesn't know you develop upon seeing these results? What impression might they have if they clicked and read the information contained in the first few results?

LEGAL AND MORAL ASPECTS OF DIGITAL REPUTATION

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 20 min.

Introduction: You are responsible for the information you put online. Even if you use false profiles to try and hide your identity, the user profile can be linked back to you if required. So, if the profile is used to do harm like online bullying and it is reported to the Police, they have the means to trace that profile back to its creator. Even if users attempt to hide their presence on the Internet, they are never truly hidden. Also, you are responsible for the information you have stored

on your computers, mobiles, tablets or any device that connects to the Internet that you can save things to. Be very careful that the information you are storing or sharing is legal and not abusive in anyway.

Questions to the students:

1. Which information storing is legal or abusive in anyway?
2. Have you ever post, share or save such information in the past? Why?
3. Were there any consequences?

MINDFULNESS ABOUT DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Activity: Discussion**Duration:** 20 min.

Introduction: Be mindful of how much information you share about yourself online. Keep personal details safe. You would not choose to share that information to a stranger in the street so why would you do it online. Stay safe online by keeping up to date with your privacy settings. Sites do have a habit of changing their privacy settings without telling us so keep an eye on them. Stay in control of who can see your posts and who you make friends with. If it is someone you don't know be careful because it could be a false account where the user has lied about their age or gender to get to know you. Remember, it is more important to have friends you know than lots of friends you don't know or don't know well because you never know what they are doing with the information you post. Increasingly, colleges, universities and potential employers will search the Internet to see what they can find out about you. If you have been using the Internet for a while and have not protected yourself or been careful about how you are portraying yourself online, that is a whole lot of information they can find out about you. On the flip side, if you have used the Internet in a positive way this can be helpful. First impressions are important so when posting online think – would I be happy for my parents/guardians to see this. If the answer is 'no' then don't post it.

Questions to the students: Do you know how to check and delete your personal digital footprint?

Answers and recommendations: To help you keep track of your online presence here are some tips¹⁵²:

1. **Search yourself online:** Do a simple web search of your name and see what you can find. If you find something you don't like, remove it if you can.
2. **Check privacy settings:** make sure you know what information you are sharing on the websites you use, particularly on social networking sites. Most social networking sites have privacy settings to help you manage the content you share and who you share it with; you can decide if you want your posts to be shared with your online friends and followers only or with the public. Keep in mind that your friend's content and their settings can also affect your digital footprint.
3. **Think before you post:** before you post that funny picture of your friend, or make that joke about someone on Twitter, ask yourself do you want everyone to see it; friends, family, grandparents, future employers? Would you be happy for others to post that type of content about you?
4. **Deactivate and delete:** when you stop using a social networking profile or website, it's a good idea to deactivate or delete your account. This will mean the content is no longer live and should not be searchable online; it will also remove the risk of these accounts being hacked without you knowing.
5. **Make a positive footprint:** we hear a lot about the negative footprints left behind online. The best way to keep your online reputation in check is to use your time online to get creative and create a positive footprint.

RESPONDING TO COMPLEX INFORMATION¹⁵³

CLASS INTERACTION: Pass out the “What should you do?” resource. Organize students into pairs. Ask students to discuss the scenarios on the worksheet and come up with two strategies/ solutions for each scenario and think about the potential consequences of their actions. Give them 15 minutes to do this.

TEACHER'S NOTE: The handouts are intended to teach students to think critically about their online behaviors and how they treat others. The names and situations in the handouts can be further localized to reflect common names and activities in the area you are teaching.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- What should you do when someone posts content about you that you don't like and/or find inappropriate in that context?
- What should you think about before posting content about someone else?

HANDOUT FOR STUDENTS: What Should You Do?

Please write your responses to each question in the space provided. Keep in mind there are no wrong answers. Please think carefully about the questions and share your own opinion.

SCENARIO 1: Nafisa and her best friend Jad just had a huge fight. Afterwards, Nafisa shared a really mean post about Jad on social media. Later that night, Jad texts her and they forgive each other, but her post is still online.

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| QUESTIONS: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What could happen?• What should Nafisa do? What should Jad do?• Can you think of a real-life example of this situation? |
|-------------------|---|

SCENARIO 2: Dima took photos of some of her friends acting silly and posted them on social media, with hashtags that could sound rude or mean, but were actually inside jokes with her friends. The next day, Layla, another friend, came up to her at school and said that she thought that the hashtags were really hurtful.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| QUESTIONS: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What could happen?• What should Dima do? What else could Layla do?• What if Layla had confronted Dima online instead of in person?• Can you think of a real-life example of this situation?• What if Layla started calling her a bully? How do you think being seen as a bully might affect Dima's reputation in the future? |
|-------------------|--|

SCENARIO 3: Sarah was on social media when she discovered that Rayan, a boy at school, had taken a photo of her and written, "Haha #whatnottowear" (making fun of her clothes). Of course, Sarah was really upset.

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|-------------------|--|
| QUESTIONS: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What could happen?• What should Rayan do? What should Sarah do? |
|-------------------|--|

HANDOUT FOR TEACHERS: What Should You Do?

Please write your responses to each question in the space provided. Keep in mind there are no wrong answers. Please think carefully about the questions and share your own opinion.

SCENARIO 1: Nafisa and her best friend Jad just had a huge fight. Afterwards, Nafisa shared a really mean post about Jad on social media. Later that night, Jad texts her and they forgive each other, but her post is still online.

QUESTIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">What could happen? - Answers may vary.What should Nafisa do? What should Jad do? - Some examples include: Someone could see the post and report Nafisa for bullying or misinterpret her and Jad's relationship and feelings towards each other. Jad might still perceive the post to be rude. It is probably a good idea for Nafisa to remove her post.Can you think of a real-life example of this situation? - Students should reflect on examples they have encountered or heard of in the past. Bear in mind that sharing these real-life examples might be uncomfortable for students. Let them share examples of friends or people they know (vs. themselves).
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SCENARIO 2: Dima took photos of some of her friends acting silly and posted them on social media, with hashtags that could sound rude or mean, but were actually inside jokes with her friends. The next day, Layla, another friend, came up to her at school and said that she thought that the hashtags were really hurtful.

QUESTIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">What could happen? - Answers may vary.What should Dima do? What else could Layla do? - Dima should apologize or explain herself. Students should consider how their actions may be perceived
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	<p>differently than they were intended, but that does not mean others' perceptions are invalid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What if Layla had confronted Dima online instead of in person? - If Layla had confronted Dima on a public post, others would be able to weigh in on the issue and explain the inside joke or why the statement was offensive. It may be resolved or it may become a larger dispute amongst many other people. If Layla contacted Dima via an online message, then Dima would be able to discuss it with her in the aftermath and edit her post if she was convinced it was inappropriate.
SCENARIO 3:	Sarah was on social media when she discovered that Rayan, a boy at school, had taken a photo of her and written, "Haha #whatnottowear" (making fun of her clothes). Of course, Sarah was really upset.
QUESTIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What could happen? - Answers may vary.• What should Rayan do? What should Sarah do? - Sarah should confront Rayan about his actions to let him know that they were hurtful. Sarah can also report Rayan's actions to the social media platform and an adult (e.g. parent/ guardian, teacher, or school administrator).

RESPONDING TO NEGATIVE INFORMATION

Part 1: ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- If you find negative information about yourself when you search for your name online (e.g., through a search engine or on social media), can you do something about it?
- What are some examples of content you might not want others to see?

Part 2: TELL YOUR STUDENTS: There are different approaches as to what can be done if you encounter online content about yourself that you don't like, depending on the context and the type of information, among other factors. One approach is "counter-speech," which means to draw attention/ give more visibility to positive stories about yourself by creating and managing content that

reflects you in a positive light. You can do this, for example, by creating a social media presence when appropriate, starting a blog, or registering a website based on your name. A second approach includes different measures to have negative content removed. For instance, if you see content, you do not like (e.g., a photo of you), you can try to reach out directly to the individual who posted it (particularly on social media and/ or messaging apps) to ask him or her to remove the content. Many platforms also provide interfaces to flag information that you feel is annoying or not interesting; content (e.g., photos, videos, text-based posts) that shows you in a negative/ unflattering light; content that shouldn't be on the platform (e.g., seems offensive, violent or prohibited); and content that appears to be a scam. The platform then checks it against its terms of service and community norms. In some cases, you might have legal remedies and can, for instance, file a lawsuit in a court of law, depending on jurisdiction and applicable law (e.g., in some cases of invasion of privacy or false statements that damage someone's reputation). Some countries have specific laws that require platforms to take down certain types of unlawful content upon notification. Please also note that sometimes attempting to suppress/ remove/ correct content might inadvertently draw greater attention to it.

TEACHER'S NOTE: This example is intended to educate students about the laws governing social media platforms and data in their country. The laws governing social media platforms and data protection can be further localized to reflect your student's local context in the area you are teaching.

Part 3: TEACHER'S NOTE: In Part 3, discuss any laws and regulations around data protection in your country or region that may be relevant for your students. This example is intended to educate students about the laws governing social media platforms and data in their country, so they can be more informed digital citizens. For example:

- **Egypt:** The Personal Data Protection Law was passed in 2020, which stipulates that personal data must be accurate and kept secure and only used for legitimate and public reasons. Users have the right to withdraw consent to the collection of their personal data and they can delete/ change/ update their personal data. This does not apply to the Central Bank of Egypt and national security authorities.
- **United Arab Emirates:** In early September 2021, the UAE announced the creation of a data privacy law that would limit the ways businesses can use data and allows for the 'right to be forgotten' or the right to remove data and personal information from the internet.

HOW PUBLICLY AVAILABLE ONLINE INFORMATION FORMS OPINIONS?

Activity: Assignment

Duration: 30 min

TELL YOUR STUDENTS: Over the next 30 minutes, individually choose a public figure (e.g., someone in the music/ film/ TV industry, political figure, business leader). Search for publicly available information about that person online and explain, in a short paragraph, how this information has helped you form an opinion about this person. If you could provide this individual with four recommendations about how content about them could be available online differently (e.g., a change in privacy settings, a change in audience, a change in the substance of the content) and/ or not be available at all (e.g., deleted, have taken down) to improve how this person presents themselves/ is perceived by others online, what would they be? Give students 30 minutes to finish the assignment.

A GAME OF MEMORY

Activity: Game

Duration: 20 min

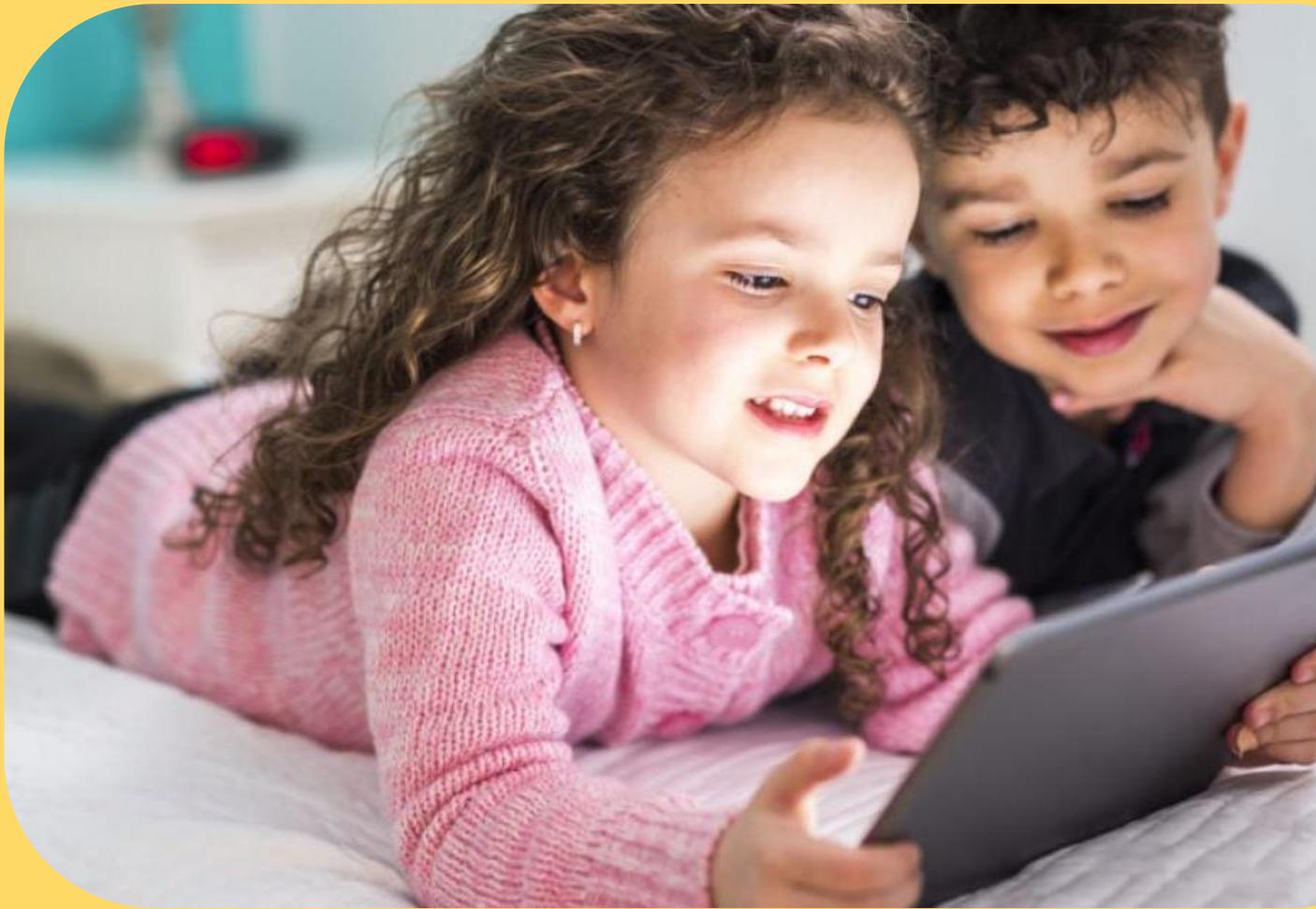
Instructions: Split in teams. Each team should memorize as many of the statements below as possible without using pen, paper or any digital device:

1. The Internet is public space with a large audience
2. Digital footprints can be searched or shared
3. Once online, things can be there forever
4. You should always think before you post online
5. You should keep certain personal details private
6. Individuals can take control of their digital footprints
7. Digital footprints can be helpful or harmful to reputations
8. Treat your password like your toothbrush – don't share it with anyone and change it often.
9. Always remember to log off when you have finished with an online service.
10. Be aware that most of the websites you visit will make a note of your visit and may also track the websites you visit before and after their website!
11. Let an adult know if anything you read or see makes you feel worried or upset.

Conclusion: The winner is the team that managed to remember and present most of the statement about digital footprint.

PROGRAM 9:

MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING ONLINE



PROGRAM 9: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING ONLINE

9.1. MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The increase in the use of social networking sites has raised concerns about the impact they may have on users' psychological well-being.

The use of social networking sites has increased significantly in recent years. Social networking refers to 'websites and online tools that facilitate interaction between users by providing them with opportunities to share information, opinions and interests'. People use social networks for many reasons, including entertainment, communication and information seeking. Remarkably, adolescents and young people are spending more and more time on social networks. Social networks have changed the forms of group interaction and the individual and collective behavior of their users. However, the use of social networks also contributes to building a sense of connectedness with others, which can reduce social isolation. The impact of smartphone use on psychological well-being depends on the amount of time spent on each type of app and the activities that users engage in.

Psychological well-being is no longer on the periphery of discussions about digital life. In recent years, technology overuse and psychological well-being have been a constant focus of both public discourse and academic research. Young people are differentially susceptible to the impact of social networks. The individual, social and contextual risk factors present in adolescents' offline lives are often reflected or amplified when they use networks. For example, adolescents who have mental health issues, those who are victims, those who have limited family resources, and those who are surrounded by more offline violence in their communities all face digital risks that can impact their health and well-being. Yet the use of social networks can also reduce or mitigate offline risk. Youth who are socially excluded offline can find supportive community connections and resources for coping and recovery online.

A few examples of causes of impaired mental health and well-being: cyberbullying is associated with poor psychosocial functioning, increased likelihood of self-harm and poor physical health, and reduced academic achievement. Some types of sexting are associated with internalizing problems (depression/anxiety) and risky sexual health behaviors, especially in younger adolescents. Self-expression and digital imprints are intertwined with identity development, which is a key task of adolescence and healthy psychosocial development for all youth. Depressed adolescents also report online self-

expression practices such as oversharing, "stress posting," and disclosing their own mental health issues. These practices can increase short-term risks (for example, because they contribute to algorithmic inputs that suggest interest in depressing genic or triggering content) and create lasting digital footprints with sensitive mental health information. Mental health is a resource that enables people to fulfil their intellectual and emotional potential and to find and fulfil their roles in social, school and professional life. Good mental health contributes to prosperity, solidarity and social justice.

Mental health and its determinants

The WHO describes mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual is aware of his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to his or her community" Mental health includes mental health problems and strain, impaired functioning associated with distress, symptoms and diagnosed mental disorders such as schizophrenia and depression. People's mental health is determined by multiple factors, including biological (e.g., genetics, gender), individual (e.g., personal experience), family and social (e.g., social support), and economic and environmental (e.g., social status and living conditions) factors.

The majority of mental health problems first appear during the adolescent years. Thus, adolescence is a critical developmental window for both prevention and mental health intervention. Despite improvements in our understanding and ability to detect and treat youth mental health problems, there remains a persistent need for mental health services among youth, with the majority of youth going untreated. Among youth receiving treatment, there is often a long gap between the onset of symptoms and when the youth first receive treatment, as well as low treatment attendance and completion rates in this population. As rates of mental health problems such as depression and suicidality continue to rise during adolescence, the gap between those needing and receiving mental health services will continue to grow. In this chapter, we examine the potential for technology to improve our understanding and treatment of adolescent mental health problems through digital mental health interventions.

Mental well-being refers to a state of emotional and psychological health in which people are able to cope with the stresses of life, form meaningful relationships and fulfil their potential. Mental health, on the other hand, encompasses a broader range of emotional, psychological and social well-being factors that influence how people think, feel and act.

In today's digitally connected world, social networks play an important role in young people's lives. While these platforms offer many benefits, such as instant communication, access to information and opportunities for self-expression, they also have an impact on the psychological well-being and mental health of young users. The impact of social networking on young people's mental wellbeing and mental health is complex and multifaceted. While these platforms offer valuable opportunities for social connection and self-expression, they also present risks that can negatively impact mental health. By promoting digital literacy, encouraging healthy online behavior and providing support systems for young users, we can aim to create a more positive and mentally healthy online environment for the younger generation.

Positive aspects of social networks on mental well-being:

Social connection: Social networks provide a platform for young people to connect with friends, family and like-minded people around the world, fostering a sense of belonging and reducing feelings of isolation.

Online communities centered around mental health, hobbies or shared experiences offer support and empathy, allowing young people to find understanding and encouragement.

Expression and creativity: Social media platforms allow young users to express themselves, showcase their talents and explore creative outlets, fostering a sense of achievement and self-confidence.

Access to information: Social networks facilitate access to mental health resources, awareness campaigns and educational materials, promoting mental health literacy among young people.

Negative aspects of social networks on mental health:

Social comparison: young users may engage in constant social comparison, leading to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety and depression when comparing their lives to idealized representations on social networks.

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying on social networks can seriously affect mental health, leading to low self-esteem, depression and even suicidal thoughts among young victims.

Fear of missing out (FOMO): Constant exposure to the seemingly exciting lives of others can trigger FOMO, leading to anxiety, loneliness and dissatisfaction with one's own life.

Digital addiction: Excessive use of social networking sites can lead to digital addiction, causing disruptions in sleep patterns, concentration and overall mental well-being.

Promoting positive mental health in social networks:

Digital literacy: training young people in digital literacy, critical thinking and media literacy to help them navigate the online world responsibly and avoid potential harm.

Healthy boundaries: Encouraging young users to set healthy boundaries for their use of social media, ensuring they take regular breaks and prioritise real-life interactions.

Empathy: Promote a culture of empathy and kindness online by encouraging young users to treat others with respect and support those who may be struggling.

Seeking support: Encourage young people to seek support from trusted adults or mental health professionals if they experience cyberbullying or have mental health issues related to their online activities.

9.2. SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION

Events during adolescence strongly influence a young person's development and can determine their attitudes and behavior later in life. Teenagers are often in conflict with authority and the cultural and moral norms of society. This has certain effects on their development and can trigger several defense mechanisms on the part of the young. During adolescence, there is an increased risk of emotional crises, often accompanied by mood swings and periods of anxiety and depressive behavior, which some adolescents try to combat by withdrawing, avoiding any extensive social contact, aggressive reactions, and addictive behavior. Teenagers are extremely vulnerable and receptive during this period and may be drawn to the Internet as a form of escapism.

Young people have accepted the internet as a way of life. In addition, the penetration into their lives in terms of time and emotional resources that young people give them - social networks will undoubtedly have a big impact on their

mental health. In recent years, the widespread use of social networks has significantly changed the way we communicate, connect and share information. While these platforms offer various benefits, such as improved social connectivity and access to a vast amount of knowledge, they also pose potential risks when the easy access to social networks determines the development of addictive behavior. Over time, this addiction can lead to risky behavior on social networks.

Internet addiction is a behavioral problem. Behavioral addictions work on a modified principle of the classic addiction model. Addiction or dependence on the Internet and social networks as a behavior has been compared to addiction to alcohol and cigarettes, gambling, and drugs. A key factor in both drug and Internet addiction as a behavior is the concept of psychological addiction, where there is no physiological intake, such as ingestion of a substance. Internet addiction in puberty can negatively affect life satisfaction and engagement, which can negatively affect cognitive functioning, lead to poor academic performance and acquisition of risky behaviors. Internet addiction is also associated with depression, somatization, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Paranoid ideation, hostility, anxiety, depression, interpersonal sensitivity, and obsessive-compulsive behavior scores were found to be higher in young adults with severe Internet addiction than those without Internet addiction. Factors influencing Internet and social network addiction include:

- Need to satisfy a desire for dangerous situations;
- Satisfying the need for constant control over the situation;
- Satisfying the need to communicate in the presence of social pathological problems;
- Constant anxiety.

Addiction to social networks can lead to distortion of personal attitudes and loss of identity in real life, affecting users' well-being and interpersonal relationships as follows:

- **Identity fragmentation:** When addicted to social media, people can become preoccupied with crafting and maintaining a particular online persona. They may present an idealized version of themselves, emphasizing their best qualities and accomplishments while minimizing vulnerabilities and imperfections. Over time, this act of constantly maintaining an online identity can create a disconnect between virtual and real life, leading to identity fragmentation.

- **Social comparison and low self-esteem:** Social networks often foster an environment where users can compare themselves to others through metrics such as likes, comments, and followers. For those who are addicted, this constant comparison can lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem when they are perceived as falling short in terms of popularity or social validation.
- **Addiction to external validation:** Addiction to social media can foster a heavy reliance on external validation from others. Individuals may seek constant approval through likes, comments, and shares, leading to an unhealthy attachment to the opinions of strangers or acquaintances instead of valuing their own sense of self-worth.
- **Decreased attention span and focus:** The addictive nature of social media, with its constant stream of information and notifications, can lead to a decreased attention span and reduced ability to focus on real-world tasks or interactions. This phenomenon, known as "distracted living," can hinder productivity and disrupt meaningful face-to-face connections.
- **Neglecting real-life relationships:** As addiction to social media increases, people may prioritize their online interactions over real-life relationships. Spending too much time on social media can lead to neglecting family, friends and other important aspects of life, leading to feelings of isolation and detachment from those closest to you.
- **Dysregulated emotional regulation:** Addiction to social media can amplify emotional highs and lows, as users may experience intense emotions in response to virtual interactions. These emotional fluctuations, combined with a constant need for validation, can lead to a lack of emotional regulation, impacting overall mental well-being.
- **Loss of privacy and security:** When addicted to social media, people may inadvertently reveal personal information or engage in risky behavior due to a reduced sense of privacy and security. This vulnerability could expose users to potential online threats, such as identity theft or cyberbullying.

It is critical to acknowledge and address the impact of social media addiction on real-life personal attitudes and identities. Promoting digital literacy, encouraging healthy online habits and setting limits on social media use can help people regain control of their digital lives and maintain a balanced relationship with technology.

A personality disorders

Personality is vital to defining who we are as individuals. It involves a unique combination of traits—including attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors—and how we express those traits in our interactions with others and the world around us. Personality disorders can cause distorted perceptions of reality, abnormal behavior, and distress in various aspects of life, including work, relationships, and social functioning. Additionally, people with a personality disorder may not recognize their troubling behavior or the negative effect it has on others.

A personality disorder is a mental health condition that involves long-lasting, pervasive, disruptive patterns of thinking, behavior, mood, and relating to others. These patterns cause a person significant distress and/or impair their ability to function.

Distortion of attitudes is growing rapidly, especially among young people who are active users of social networks. These disordered behaviors result from the interaction of several factors, including ideals of beauty. An important factor is social networks, through which unrealistic ideals of beauty are promoted and can lead to distortion of personal attitudes.

Distortion of personality attitudes and loss of identity in real life

Distortion of personal attitudes and loss of identity can have significant psychological consequences, including anxiety, depression, social isolation and reduced general well-being. Being informed and understanding these risks is key to using social media in a balanced and healthy way. It's also important to encourage offline relationships and activities, set boundaries for social media use, and seek professional help if needed. Distortion of personal attitudes and loss of identity in real life as a result of excessive use of social networks refers to a change in self-perception, beliefs, behavior and sense of self due to intense or uncontrolled participation in these platforms. The main manifestations include:

- **Identity Substitution:** The tendency to identify more with one's online persona, leading to a divergence between online and offline identities. This can lead to a loss of a consistent sense of self in real-life interactions.
- **Social Comparison:** The habit of comparing ourselves to others based on their online images, which can lead to distorted self-perception and feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem or anxiety.

- **Distortion of personality attitudes:** Changes in one's attitudes, beliefs, or behavior to conform to perceived norms or expectations in social networks that may not match one's offline personality.
- **Reduced authenticity:** The tendency to present oneself in a way that is not authentic in order to gain validation, approval or acceptance in social networks.
- **Erosion of privacy boundaries:** A blurring of the boundaries between private and public life, leading to discomfort or confusion about which aspects of ourselves to share or keep private.
- **Addiction:** Overreliance on social networks for social interaction, self-esteem, or sense of identity, which may lead to neglect of offline relationships and activities.

Ultimately, fostering a healthy balance between virtual interactions and real-life connections is key to maintaining one's authenticity, identity, and emotional well-being in an increasingly digitalized world. By actively promoting digital mindfulness and self-awareness, we can responsibly navigate the social media landscape and build meaningful, fulfilling relationships both online and offline.



PROGRAM 9: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING ONLINE

TRAINING METHODS AND ACTIONS

By participating in learning exercises, related to mental wellbeing and mental health young people can gain a deeper understanding of the impact of social networks on mental wellbeing and mental health. Encouraging digital detoxification, promoting emotional resilience, fostering a positive online environment and connecting young users with valuable mental health resources can contribute to a more supportive and mentally healthy digital landscape for young people. The purpose of this training program is to provide young people who actively use social networks with the knowledge and skills needed to promote their mental health and well-being in the digital environment.

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL WELL-BEING?

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 60 min

Instruction: Swap roles. Participants are divided into two groups. The first group plays the role of a socially active person who hardly uses social networks and does not know what is happening there, is not familiar with the meta language of networks and does not use chats. Second group: plays the role of active users of social networks, the main communication is there, speaks with the language of networks and does not know what is happening in the real world.

HOW TO FIND OUT HOW AM I?

Activity: training exercise

Duration: 60 min

Instruction: The goal of this activity is for participants to learn the skills to set healthy boundaries when using social networks, recognize signs of distress in others and offer support, encourage help-seeking behavior, and provide mental health support resources.

Implementation: the group works on the Matrix by answering the questions first. The results are discussed using the Methods for Mental Well-Being.

Assessment: Assesses participant understanding and progress through pre- and post-training surveys, group activities and participant feedback. Active participation in discussions is encouraged.

WORK CARD:

QUESTION	ANSWER
What did I do better today than yesterday?	
Why do I go on social networks?	
What need does being on social networks satisfy?	
How many minutes was I in nature?	
How long did I talk to friends in live contact?	

ANALYZING ONLINE AND OFFLINE INTERACTIONS

Activity: training exercise

Duration: 60 min

Instruction: This exercise aims to help participants reflect on their online behaviors, realize the impact of social networks on social isolation and encourage healthier online and offline interactions. By promoting a mindful approach to social media use and promoting positive online communities, participants can actively combat social isolation and create a more balanced and fulfilling digital experience.

Objective: The purpose is to encourage participants to reflect on the balance between their online and offline interactions.

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to create two lists: one for their online interactions (eg, social networks, online games, messaging apps) and one for their offline interactions (e.g., face-to-face conversations, social events).
2. Have participants compare the time spent in each type of interaction and discuss their findings with a partner or in small groups.
3. Encourage a group discussion where participants share their insights, including any feelings of social isolation they may be experiencing due to excessive online interactions.
4. Encourage participants to brainstorm ways to find a healthier balance between online and offline interactions

DIGITAL DETOX CHALLENGE

Activity: training exercise

Duration: 60 min

Objective: To encourage participants to take a break from social media and focus on building real-life connections.

Instructions:

1. Introduce the concept of digital detox and explain its benefits in reducing social isolation.
2. Challenge participants to undertake a one-day or weekend digital detox, during which they refrain from using social networks and digital devices for non-essential purposes.
3. Provide participants with alternative activities to engage in during the digital detox, such as spending time with friends and family, pursuing hobbies, or volunteering in the community.
4. After the digital detox period, hold a debriefing session where participants share their experiences, challenges and insights gained during the detox.

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS ON EMOTIONS

Activity: training exercise

Duration: 60 min

Objective: To help participants understand the relationship between social networking and emotions and how they can affect mental health.

Instructions:

1. Present participants with a list of emotions (e.g., happiness, anxiety, jealousy, contentment) and ask them to think about how social networking can affect each emotion.
2. In small groups, have participants discuss their experiences with specific emotions related to social networking use and share personal stories if they feel comfortable.
3. Facilitate a group discussion about how social networking can enhance or influence emotions and how people can develop emotional resilience to cope with these feelings.

CREATING A POSITIVE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

Activity: training exercise

Duration: 60 min

Objective: To encourage participants to actively contribute to a positive and supportive online community.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into small groups and assign each group a specific social network (e.g., Instagram, Twitter, TikTok).
2. Ask each group to consider ways to create a more positive and inspiring online environment on their assigned platform.
3. Each group should present their ideas to the other participants, focusing on strategies to combat cyberbullying, promote mental health awareness, and encourage supportive interactions.
4. Encourage participants to implement some of these strategies on their own social media profiles and share their experiences in future sessions.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Activity: training exercise

Duration: 60 min

Objective: To enable participants to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing on social media.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into teams and assign each team a specific mental health topic (e.g., anxiety, stress, self-care).
2. Instruct each team to create a mental health awareness campaign around their assigned social media topic.
3. The campaign can include informative posts, infographics, videos, or any creative content that educates others on the importance of mental health.
4. Encourage participants to use appropriate hashtags and share their campaigns on their personal social media profiles to reach a wider audience.
5. Conclude the exercise with a group discussion on the impact of using social media as a platform for mental health advocacy and how it contributes to destigmatizing mental health issues.

SEARCH FOR MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Activity: training exercise

Duration: 60 min

Objective: To introduce participants to online mental health resources and support networks available on social media.

Instructions:

1. Provide participants with a list of mental health hashtags, accounts, and groups on various social media platforms.
2. Divide participants into teams and challenge them to find and explore these resources at a set time.
3. After the scavenger hunt, have each team share the mental health resources they found and discuss their potential benefits for young people.
4. Conclude the exercise with a discussion about the importance of using reliable mental health resources and seeking professional help when needed.

DIGITAL WELLBEING

Activity: training exercise

Duration: 120 min

By engaging in this practical exercise, participants will develop strategies and action plans to prioritize their digital wellbeing in the context of social media. They will gain insight into healthy social networking habits, promoting positive digital interactions and creating a healthier relationship with social networks. Encourage participants to apply the strategies discussed and support each other in their journey to maintaining digital well-being.

Objective: The purpose of this exercise is to promote young people's digital wellbeing in the context of social networks. By participating in this exercise, participants will develop strategies to maintain a healthy and balanced online presence, promote positive digital interactions and prioritize their wellbeing in the digital world.

Introduction (10 minutes): Begin by discussing the concept of digital well-being and its importance in young people's lives. Explain how social networking can impact mental health, self-esteem, and overall well-being. Emphasize the need to cultivate healthy relationships with social networks.

Self-reflection (15 minutes). Encourage them to think about their own experiences and emotions regarding social networks. Provide prompts such as:

- How do you feel when you use social networks?
- What aspects of social networking contribute to your well-being?
- Are there aspects that negatively impact your well-being?

Discussion on healthy social networking habits (20 minutes): Start a group discussion on healthy social networking habits. Encourage participants to share their experiences and insights. Discuss strategies for maintaining positive digital well-being, such as:

- Set limits on social networking use (e.g., set screen-free time, limit overall use).
- Being mindful of content consumed and consciously maintaining a positive online environment.
- Practicing digital detoxes or taking a break from social media when necessary.
- Cultivating a healthy perspective, remembering that social networks are a curated representation of the lives of others.
- Building a supportive network and engaging in positive interactions with others online.

Group activity: digital wellbeing action plan (20 minutes): divide participants into small groups and assign each group the task of creating a digital wellbeing action plan. Instruct them to consider and develop strategies that promote well-being on social media. Encourage them to consider both individual actions and collective efforts within their peer groups or communities.

Action Plan Presentation and Feedback (15 minutes): Provide each group with an opportunity to present their digital well-being action plan to the larger group. Allow time for feedback and discussion. Encourage participants to give suggestions, share insights, and discuss the feasibility and potential impact of each action plan.

Reflection and personal engagement (10 minutes): Allow time for participants to reflect on the exercise and what they have learned. Ask them to make a personal commitment to priorities their digital wellbeing. This commitment can be in the form of specific actions they will take or changes they will implement in their social media habits.

Sharing digital wellbeing tips (10 minutes): Invite participants to share their personal digital wellbeing tips and strategies with the group. Encourage a

supportive and non-judgmental environment. Participants can offer insights, recommendations, or practices they have found helpful in maintaining their own digital well-being.

Q&A and Closure (10 minutes): Allow the floor for any questions or concerns participants may have about digital well-being. Provide guidance and additional resources as needed. Conclude the exercise by summarizing key takeaways and emphasizing the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between social media use and overall well-being.

SOCIAL MEDIA DETOX CHALLENGE

Activity: training exercise

Duration: 2-3 days

Objective: To raise awareness of the potential distortion of personal attitudes due to excessive use of social networks and to encourage participants to take a break from social networks.

Instructions:

1. Discuss with participants the impact of excessive social networking use on personal attitudes such as self-esteem, body image, and social comparison.
2. Challenge participants to limit their use of social networks. During this period, they must refrain from using all networks.
3. Ask participants to keep a journal during the period noting any changes they observe in their attitudes and emotions.
4. At the end of the week, bring participants together for a group discussion to share their experiences and observations.

RECOGNIZING DISTORTED PERCEPTIONS

Activity: training exercise

Duration: 2-3 days

Objective: To help participants identify their distorted personal attitudes and perceptions resulting from excessive use of social networks.

Instructions:

1. Provide participants with a list of common personality attitudes affected by social networking, such as body image issues, fear of missing out (FOMO), and heightened social comparison.

2. Divide participants into small groups and assign each group a specific personality trait to focus on.
3. Instruct each group to discuss and share examples of how social media can contribute to the distortion of personal attitudes.
4. Have each group present their findings to the rest of the participants, explaining the mechanisms by which social networks distort perceptions and attitudes.

ANALYZING THE CONTENT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

Activity: training exercise

Duration: 60 min.

Objective: To develop critical thinking skills regarding the impact of social media content on individual attitudes.

Instructions:

1. Have participants browse various social networks and identify content that could potentially distort personal attitudes.
2. Instruct them to categorize the content into different types, such as unrealistic body images, materialistic displays, and exaggerated lifestyles.
3. Each participant must select one content they have found and analyze its potential effects on personal attitudes.
4. In a group discussion, participants share their analysis and discuss strategies to mitigate the negative impact of such content.

EXERCISE 4: BUILDING A POSITIVE ONLINE PRESENCE

Activity: training exercise

Duration: 60 min.

Objective: To encourage participants to use social media in a way that promotes positive self-regard.

Instructions:

1. Discuss the concept of online personal branding and its impact on personal attitudes.
2. Ask participants to create a plan to build a positive online presence by sharing content that reflects their true selves, promotes self-acceptance, and fosters a supportive online community.

3. Participants should present their plans to the group and get feedback on how they can further improve their online presence.
4. Encourage participants to implement their plans and periodically review and adjust them as needed to maintain a healthy online presence.

PROGRAM 10:

POSITIVE ONLINE

ENGAGEMENT



PROGRAM 10: POSITIVE ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Technology and digital media are powerful tools. And just as we wouldn't hand a child a chainsaw without first teaching them how to use it, we should teach our kids how to use their devices in a positive, intentional, and healthy way¹⁵⁴. Being online, in a world mediated by digital technologies, brings significant benefits to children and young people. This is already recognized by those who have an interest in their wellbeing – their families and the professionals and communities who support them. In fact, digital interaction has become almost indispensable for participation and progress in the modern world, and the development of these skills is an essential part of preparedness for adult life¹⁵⁵. The pandemic has offered societies an opportunity to shift away from debates surrounding 'digital wellbeing', and towards the more nuanced concept of 'wellbeing in a digital world'. 'Digital wellbeing' implies digitally mediated wellbeing as distinct and with clear boundaries. In contrast, 'wellbeing in a digital world' acknowledges the complicated world in which our children and young people grow and change, and offers a number of opportunities¹⁵⁶.

The four-dimensional model of digital wellbeing

There are many ways of defining and measuring wellbeing¹⁵⁷. Digital wellbeing is assessed along four dimensions, which comprise¹⁵⁸:

- 1. Developmental wellbeing:** realization of cognitive capabilities and achievement of educational potential; managing financial responsibilities that come with maturation; personal growth¹⁵⁹.
- 2. Emotional wellbeing:** healthy emotional development; ability to cope with stress and setbacks; spiritual development; development of thoughtful values and a positive outlook; space and opportunities to flourish; life purpose; autonomy; feeling successful¹⁶⁰.
- 3. Physical wellbeing:** achievement and maintenance of healthy thriving; development of physical capabilities; using technology in physical safety; access/lack of access to supportive or accessibility technologies.
- 4. Social wellbeing:** participation in wider communities including schools, clubs or societies; being an active citizen; ability to work with others; healthy interaction with online communities; maintenance of positive and sustainable online personae; managing the risks of grooming and exploitation; development and maintenance of good relations with significant people both online and offline; communication with people we know.

Digital wellbeing is quite a complex subject. Defining what is right and what is wrong in digital wellbeing, is not that straightforward as digital technology brings both positive and negative outcomes to our overall wellbeing. Digital wellbeing is a term used to describe the impact that technologies and digital services have on our physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. On an individual level, it is the state of personal wellbeing one experiences through the use of electronic tools, systems, devices and resources¹⁶¹.

Technology is ever more integral to the things that we do. Overuse of screens and handheld devices, and the expectation that we need to be available 24 hours a day, not only impacts our physical health, resulting in medical issues such as digital eye strain, headaches and fatigue but it also affects our mental health with an increased risk of conditions such as depression, low self-esteem and anxiety. Our emotional wellbeing is impacted too as it distracts us from the things that matter most to us. Promoting a healthy use of technology will proactively help you to maintain positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. Below are just some of the things to be aware of and how you can overcome some of the issues caused by the use of technology¹⁶².

How to achieve personal sense of digital wellbeing¹⁶³

Technology is a part of our lives whether we like it or not and overuse negatively impacts our wellbeing. However, technology also offers many positive benefits and plays an important role in education and in our health and wellbeing. Following the simple steps below can help you to identify the positive and negative aspects of technology. Meaning that you can enjoy your life knowing that you are taking care of your own sense of digital wellbeing¹⁶⁴.

- 1. Take a look at your digital habits** - Creating new habits can feel daunting but taking small steps and adjusting to a new way of using your digital devices will help you to be happier and more present. Ask yourself some questions: How do your digital devices make you feel? Do you sometimes feel overwhelmed with too much information or feel pressured or stressed by social media or messages? Maybe you get anxious if you forget your mobile phone when going out. If your digital device is causing you negative feelings, then it's most probably time to look at how you can improve your digital wellbeing!
- 2. Monitor your digital activity** - The first step towards improving your digital wellbeing is to get a detailed understanding of your tech use. It is really important to be aware of how much time you spend using digital devices

and how you interact with them. Most smartphones now have the ability to monitor your activity so you can analyze the time you spend on each app and digital device.

3. **Set the boundaries** - We are surrounded by digital devices. We live in a world of tech! However, we are failing to set healthy tech boundaries. You can set daily limits on the apps and websites you use. Once you hit the limit, the apps and sites pause, and notifications are silenced.
4. **Bedtime curfew** - Disconnect your phone or devices to help you get a better night's sleep. There are various apps that will put your phone in nighttime mode, silence your notifications and turn your screen to grayscale which minimizes blue light. Exposing ourselves to artificial blue light at bedtime disrupts our natural sleep-wake cycle as it blocks the hormone melatonin which helps us to fall asleep.
5. **Gadget free mealtime** - Throughout the years, sitting down with the family or your loved ones for an evening meal was the time for busy families and friends to come together, relax and chat about their day at school or work. In current times, research shows that mobile phones and electronic gadgets have become part of the family meal resulting in silent meals with little or no communication. Psychologist and behavioral expert Emma Kenny said, "Making sure that mealtimes are a technology-free zone is critical to family cohesion and means that every family member can be fully present whilst enjoying a nutritious and delicious shared meal."
6. **Focus mode** - It is all too easy to get distracted by app notifications! There are options on some mobile phones to temporarily pause apps. This will prevent your phone from disturbing you when you need to focus on something important. If you try to open an app whilst in focus mode, it will remind you that the app is paused!
7. **Prioritize real-time relationships** - There is a term 'phubbing' which means ignoring your friends or family in favor of looking at your phone. Research shows that 'phubbing' robs us of our fundamental needs and can seriously affect our relationships and increase stress levels! Phubbed people can feel excluded, unwanted and ignored – not a great basis for a healthy relationship! Try establishing some unplugged zones in your home! Give your family and loved ones the chance to talk and listen without any distractions. Try turning your phone off completely, rather than on silent, as this will ensure it doesn't vibrate! If you really can't do without digital devices, then you could try playing electronic games

together, or watching TV together – sharing activities brings a greater sense of attachment and connection.

8. **Social media** - social media plays a large part in how we interact and communicate with others which can be a hugely positive thing as it keeps us connected to friends and family. It is also a great source of information. Studies show that overuse of social media (known as social media addiction) and continually communicating electronically with our friends and family, instead of face-to-face can cause depression, feelings of loneliness and social isolation. Heavy use of social media can also promote negative experiences, such as feelings of inadequacy about our appearance and how we live our lives. Taking a digital detox by spending time away from social media is one of the best things you can do to help stop the addiction. You will realize how much time you have to do other things. Try taking up non-screen-based activities such as new or old hobbies, meeting and seeing friends face-to-face.
9. **Digital ground rules** - Setting up digital ground rules is vital to ensure your children's digital wellbeing is looked after. Most digital devices enable parents to set up parental control. This means they can protect themselves from inappropriate content, online purchases, the apps they use and the time spent on their devices.

Healthy Social Media Habits

Technology has changed the way we interact with each other. Social media puts other people just keystrokes away. This helps some feel like they have more social support. But for others, it can increase isolation and depression. Researchers are investigating how social media affects mental health. They're learning that who you meet and what you find online can mean the difference between helpful and harmful effects¹⁶⁵:

- **Use Your Time Wisely**¹⁶⁶ - logging into social media can lead you in many directions. Actively engaging and connecting with others online can help build your social supports – both online and offline. But spending many hours passively scrolling through upsetting content can send you spiraling into negative thoughts and feelings. Increased social media use has been linked to symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. But it's not always clear which comes first: Is more time online causing the symptoms or a result of the symptoms? Depression or anxiety can cause you to isolate yourself. Spending more time online may be a sign that you're withdrawing from others. Studies have also found that some online

activities can worsen your mental health. Passively watching what others are doing online can make you feel more isolated. You might feel you're missing out or being left out. Or it can make you think that other people have better lives than you. What you click on then affects what you see next. If you click on things that bother you, you're likely to be shown more of those things. Repeated scrolling through disturbing content can increase your stress and anxiety. Teens are especially at risk from the effects of social media. Studies have found links between patterns in teens' social media use and mental health problems. What seems most important is how teens are using social media and how their time online is affecting their offline social networks and activities. In other words, time online takes away from time you could be spending with others, being physically active, or doing a hobby. These are things that help protect your mental health.

- **Connect Carefully¹⁶⁷** - you can find countless different people and communities online. Many meaningful and beneficial connections can be made online. This is especially true for teens who have more marginalized identities. Sometimes they can find community and connectivity online that they can't get in their day-to-day lives. But the digital world can also expose you to harmful health behaviors. Excessive drinking, substance use, and eating disorders are sometimes misleadingly shown as what everyone's doing or wants to do. People also see ads about tobacco use, cannabis use, and drinking online. Research has shown that even passively viewing tobacco content online increased the likelihood of using tobacco products and similar trends were found for alcohol and cannabis.
- **Seek Out Help¹⁶⁸** - social media can be a tool to improve your mental health. You can search for health information, hear about others' experiences, or find treatment options. Social media can be very helpful for people who are feeling stigmatized about in-person recovery. Plus, social media can help those who are curious or ready to engage in treatment but want advice from their online peers first.
- **Be yourself¹⁶⁹** - it can be tempting to create a false persona or a misleading impression of your life online because of your perceptions of others' lives. However, it is more important to be accepted for your true self rather than an idealized version. Create a social media presence that is aligned with your own identity and values;
- **Keep perspective¹⁷⁰** - keep in mind that you're not always seeing the full picture when viewing other people's social media feeds and recognize that

nobody's life is perfect. Often people use filtering and editing tools to enhance their photos. Your value as a person is not reflected in the number of 'likes' your posts get or the number of followers;

- **Take control¹⁷¹** - think about who you follow. Do they share your interests and values? Hide or unfollow feeds and users or content that makes you feel negative about yourself. Most social media apps have options to report or block unwanted content;
- **Find the balance¹⁷²** - do you ever start scrolling without even realizing it? It is easy to become absorbed by social media and this can have a negative impact on your wellbeing. Being mindful about your habits can help you recognize when you need to take a break so that you can use social media with purpose;
- **Be positive¹⁷³** - think before you post - does this make me feel good about myself? Could it be easily misconstrued? Would you express the same opinion offline? Thinking of yourself and others will ensure a positive experience and help you avoid unnecessary drama.
- **Social stopwatch¹⁷⁴** - use a timer or app tracker to help moderate use. This may be helpful for mental health as research has shown that limiting social media use to no more than 30 minutes per day can reduce feelings of loneliness and depression. This can be as simple as setting a reminder to close social media, or choosing an app tracker such as Forest or Space, where setting preferences can assist with monitoring or limiting social media use. Setting boundaries around the consumption of social media can improve productivity as well — social media use can be a distraction to daily life, work and academic tasks.
- **Social activity¹⁷⁵** - remember to take breaks to disconnect from the screen. One way to support this is by following the adage "out of sight, out of mind." Modifying settings and turning off app notifications, hiding apps in folders away from the home screen, or taking it one step further and deleting apps to further reduce temptation. Incorporate screen-free time by engaging in regular physical activity, which curtails the chances of developing a dependence on social media. Indeed, swapping the use of apps with increased physical activity and spending active time outdoors may also help to reduce stress and depression.
- **Social snacking¹⁷⁶** - we are not talking about snacking while scrolling through social media! Instead, similar to how we think of some foods as nutrient-dense which nourish our body (like apples and carrots), and others as nutrient-poor and less useful for our body (like chocolate cake

and candy), social media can be thought of in the same way: engagement that makes us feel good or leaves us feeling unwell. Aim to use social media in ways that feel good or has a purpose. Examples of productive, positive social media use include connecting with supportive friends and family, or using it to source useful information. Before you engage on social media, be aware not to overshare or post when stressed or anxious as this can result in a negative social media experience.

- **Social accountability¹⁷⁷** - be accountable to yourself and others regarding your social media use. This could mean reaching out to trusted family, friends and co-workers to ask them to gently remind you when they catch you checking your phone during face-to-face engagement. Or you can take advantage of built-in social media monitoring applications on your phone to set social media use goals and using the apps to track your progress!
- **Use wellbeing tools¹⁷⁸** - for example, lots of devices and platforms offer tools to support digital wellbeing. You may also be able to turn off notifications for apps or use ‘mute’ or ‘do not disturb’ modes. Visit the useful links below for more ideas.



PROGRAM 10: POSITIVE ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

TRAINING METHODS AND ACTIONS

CREATING POSITIVE MEDIA CONTENT

Activity: Practical exercise

Duration: 120-140 min.

Introduction: By taking part in this practical exercise, participants will develop their skills in creating positive social media content. They will learn to use their platforms to spread inspirational messages, inspire others and foster a supportive online community. Through their efforts, participants will contribute to shaping a more positive and inclusive digital space.

Objective. By participating in this exercise, participants will develop skills to create meaningful and uplifting messages, promote positive values and foster a supportive online community.

Introduction (10 minutes): Begin by discussing the impact of positive media content on social networks. Explain how people can use their social networks to spread positivity, inspire others, and create a welcoming digital environment. Emphasize the power of social networks to influence and shape perceptions.

Brainstorming Session (15 minutes). Encourage them to consider different formats such as publications, images, videos, stories or campaigns. Discuss topics that can inspire, educate or bring joy to the audience.

Design Creative Content (30 minutes): Instruct participants to create their own positive media content based on the ideas generated in the brainstorming session. Encourage them to use their creativity and unique perspectives to create engaging and impactful content. Participants can work individually or in small groups.

Presentation and feedback (20 minutes): Give participants the opportunity to present the content they have created to the group. Each participant or group can share their work and give a brief explanation of the intended message or purpose behind their content. Allow time after each presentation for feedback and constructive comments from the other participants.

Collaboration (15 minutes): Encourage participants to collaborate and support each other in spreading their positive media content. Discuss ways in which they can help each other spread their messages through sharing, tagging, or collaborating on cross-promotion. Emphasize the importance of building a supportive network to amplify the impact of positive content.

Reflection and action plan (15 minutes): Start a discussion on the results of the exercise. Ask participants to share their thoughts and experiences in creating positive media content. Encourage them to consider how they can incorporate more positivity into their regular social media presence. Guide them in developing an action plan to continue creating and sharing positive content beyond the exercise.

Follow-up and evaluation (10 minutes): After a period of time, do a follow-up session to evaluate the impact of the participants' positive media content. Reflect on engagement received, audience responses, and any changes in their personal experience or perceptions of social media. Discuss the lessons learned and how participants can continue to refine and improve their positive content creation skills.

Tips and Resources (10 minutes): Provide participants with a list of tips and resources for creating positive social media content. Include suggestions for effective storytelling, engaging visuals, using hashtags, and incorporating inspirational messages. Share examples of successful positive media campaigns or influencers that spread positivity online.

Q&A and Closure (10 minutes): Allow time for any remaining questions or concerns participants may have about creating positive media content. Offer additional guidance and clarification if needed. Summarize the key takeaways from the exercise and highlight the potential impact participants can have in shaping a more positive and inspiring online environment.

EMPATHY AND ONLINE SUPPORT

Activity: Practical exercise

Duration: 45 min.

Instructions: Present participants with real-life scenarios where people seek emotional support or guidance on social networks. Encourage participants to respond with empathy, kindness and constructive advice. Discuss the importance of creating a supportive and understanding online environment where people feel safe to share their struggles and seek help. By engaging in this

hands-on exercise, participants will develop their empathy skills and ability to provide online support on social media. They will gain insight into effective empathic communication, actively listen to the experiences of others and contribute to a more compassionate and supportive digital environment.

Objective: The objective of this exercise is to cultivate empathy and develop skills to provide online support to people in need on social networks. By participating in this exercise, participants will improve their ability to empathize, offer support, and create a compassionate digital community.

Introduction (10 minutes): Begin by discussing the importance of empathy and online support in social networks. Explain how simple acts of empathy and support can have a significant impact on someone's well-being on social networks.

Empathy Building Activity (15 minutes): Facilitate an empathy building activity to help participants develop their empathy skills. This can include participating in discussions, sharing personal stories, or participating in empathy exercises such as "Stepping into someone else's shoes." Encourage participants to reflect on the emotions and experiences of others.

Case Study (20 minutes): Provide participants with case studies or hypothetical scenarios depicting individuals facing challenges or seeking emotional support on social media. Divide participants into small groups and assign each group a case study. Instruct them to discuss and analyze the situation from an empathetic perspective.

EMPATHY AND ONLINE SUPPORT IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

Activity: Case study

Duration: 60 min.

Participant roles: Sarah - the person seeking support and Alex - the empathy response person.

Synopsis: Sarah, a 19-year-old student, recently published a social media post expressing her struggles with loneliness and anxiety. She received many responses, but one particular response from Alex stood out. Alex demonstrated empathy and offered sincere support in their comment.

Case Analysis:

- **Empathy and understanding:** Alex's response to Sarah's post showed empathy and understanding by acknowledging her feelings of loneliness

and anxiety. Alex showed genuine concern and validation of Sarah's emotions, creating a safe space for her to share her challenges.

- **Emotional Support:** Alex's comment provided emotional support by offering words of encouragement, expressing empathy, and letting Sarah know that she was not alone in her experiences. This support helped Sarah feel understood and less isolated, fostering a sense of community and empathy.
- **Practical tip:** Alongside emotional support, Alex's comment also offered Sarah practical advice. Alex recommended approaching professionals who could help Sarah cope with her feelings of loneliness and anxiety.
- **Creating a safe space:** through her empathetic response, Alex created a safe and non-judgmental space for Sarah to express herself. This environment encourages open communication and helps Sarah feel more comfortable seeking support from others online.

Impact on Sarah: Alex's empathetic response had a positive impact on Sarah. It made her feel heard, understood and supported at a difficult time. Sarah expressed her gratitude for the response, stating that it provided a glimmer of hope and motivated her to seek out the resources offered for additional support.

Conclusion: This case study highlights the importance of empathy and online support on social media. Alex's empathetic response to Sarah's post demonstrated understanding, emotional support and practical advice. By creating a safe and supportive environment, Alex helped Sarah feel less alone in her struggles, fostering a sense of community and inspiring her to seek further help. The case study highlights the positive impact people can make through empathetic responses and emphasizes the importance of creating a compassionate and supportive online community.

Empathetic responses (20 minutes): Ask participants to craft empathetic responses to the case studies assigned to their group. Encourage them to consider the individual's emotions, give them words of encouragement, and offer practical advice or support. Participants can create responses in the form of comments, messages or posts.

Sharing and feedback (15 minutes): Allow each group to share their empathy responses with the larger group. Participants can read aloud or present their responses, explaining their thought process and the empathy-led approach they have taken. Have a supportive and constructive feedback session to enhance participants' understanding of effective empathy communication.

Role play (20 minutes): Gather participants and assign one as the person seeking support and the other as the empathetic responder. Ask them to engage in a role-play where the person seeking support expresses their emotions and challenges and the responder gives an empathic response. Encourage participants to practice active listening, empathy and offering support.

EMPATHY AND ONLINE SUPPORT IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

Activity: Role play

Duration: 90 min.

Introduction (5 minutes): Explain the purpose of the role play exercise, which is to practice demonstrating empathy and providing online support on social networks. Emphasize the importance of creating a safe and compassionate digital environment. Divide participants into pairs.

Role-play scenario (10 minutes): Provide each pair with a role-play scenario involving a person seeking support and an empathetic response. Identify one participant as the person seeking support and the other as the empathetic responder. Briefly describe the situation and the emotions involved.

Scenario:

- Person seeking support (Participant A): Emma has recently lost her beloved pet and feels extremely saddened by the loss. She decides to share her feelings on social media to seek comfort and support from her friends.
- Empathic Participant (Participant B): Alex, a friend of Emma's, comes across her post and recognizes her need for empathy and support. Alex wants to respond in a way that shows understanding and offers comfort.

Role-play (15 minutes): Give participants time to prepare and participate in the role-play. Participants should focus on active listening, showing empathy and providing supportive responses. Encourage them to use their own experiences and emotions to enhance authenticity.

Discussion (10 minutes): After the role play, bring the pairs back together and facilitate the discussion. Ask the following questions to encourage reflection and sharing:

- How did it feel to play the role of the person seeking support or the empathetic responder?
- What strategies did you use to demonstrate empathy during the role play?

- How did the empathic responses affect the person seeking support?
- What challenges did you encounter and how did you overcome them?
- What did you learn from this experience that you can apply to your online interactions in real life?

Feedback and suggestions (10 minutes): Encourage participants to provide constructive feedback to their partners, focusing on the effectiveness of their empathetic responses. Participants can also provide suggestions for improvement or share specific moments that stood out as particularly impactful.

Role Switch (5 minutes): Invite participants to switch roles, allowing the person who originally played the person seeking support to now play the empathetic response and vice versa. Repeat steps 3 to 5 with the new roles.

Group reflection and conclusions (10 minutes). Ask participants to share their general conclusions and insights gained from the role play. Discuss the importance of empathy and online support in fostering a compassionate and supportive digital community.

Closing (5 minutes): Thank participants for their engagement and highlight the importance of practicing empathy and providing online support. Encourage them to move forward with these skills and make a positive impact in their online interactions in real life.

Summary and action plan (10 minutes): Summarizes the key takeaways from the exercise, highlighting the importance of empathy and online support. Discuss ways participants can incorporate empathy into their regular online interactions and support others in need. Encourage them to develop an action plan for implementing empathy practices into their social media engagement.

PROGRAM 11:

SOCIAL EXCLUSION

AND ISOLATION



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PROGRAM 11: SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

In the digital space, the term "outsider" refers to an individual or group of people who feel isolated or excluded from the online communities, social networks and digital platforms that predominate in today's interconnected world. While digital outsiders may have access to technology and the Internet, they are often perceived as on the fringes of digital culture and may not fully engage or participate in the virtual interactions that have become an integral part of modern life. Digital outsiders can experience various challenges and emotions in the digital space, such as:

- **Limited social engagement:** Digital outsiders may feel isolated from online social circles, digital communities, and virtual conversations, leading to feelings of loneliness or isolation.
- **Lack of digital skills:** Some digital outsiders may have trouble navigating the complexities of digital platforms, apps, or social networks, which may deter them from actively participating online.
- **Privacy and security concerns:** Individuals who choose to limit their digital presence due to privacy and security concerns may be perceived as outsiders in the digital space, choosing a more secure online approach.
- **Digital overload:** The fast-paced and ever-evolving nature of the digital space can be overwhelming for some people, causing them to withdraw from online interactions and activities.
- **Resistance to technological change:** Those who resist or are hesitant to embrace new digital technologies and trends may feel like outsiders in a world that is constantly embracing and relying on such innovations.
- **Cultural or language barriers:** Digital outsiders may feel excluded if digital content, interfaces or online conversations cater primarily to specific cultural or language groups.

Discriminatory behavior on social networks can have profound offline consequences, including psychological harm, social isolation and even physical violence. It is essential that social networks have strong policies and mechanisms in place to identify and counter such behavior, and that users foster respectful and inclusive digital communities. Discriminatory behavior on social media refers to actions or practices carried out on digital platforms that unfairly discriminate against people based on certain characteristics, such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, religion or another characteristic. Such behavior can reinforce harmful stereotypes, marginalize certain groups and create an environment of exclusion, intolerance and harm.

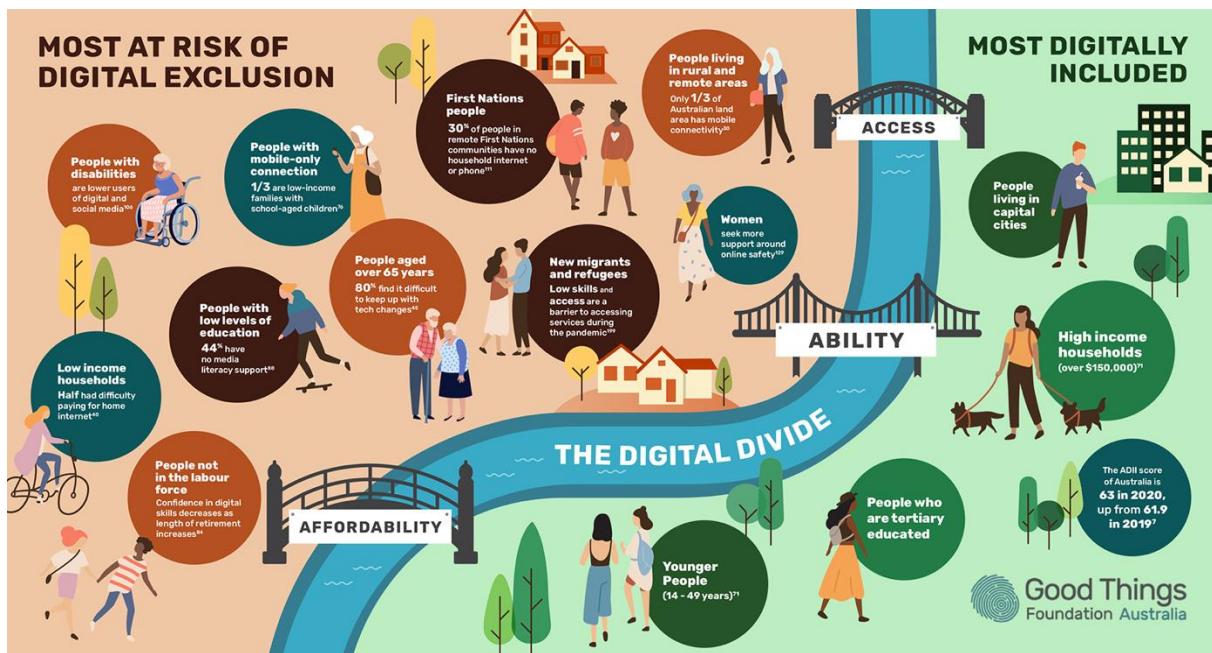


Figure 15. Youth at risk of social exclusion¹⁷⁹

For young people at risk of social exclusion, school and more generally the formal education system is far from providing them with relevant involvement in terms of their marginalization. Exploring informal digital approaches with young adults as a starting point to bridging the formal and informal learning experiences may be an effective strategy to promote digital competences associated with information, communication and digital creativity¹⁸⁰.

The main manifestations of discriminatory behavior in social networks include:

- **Hate Speech:** Use of offensive, demeaning or discriminatory language directed at individuals or groups based on their identifying characteristics.
- **Cyberbullying:** The persistent online harassment, intimidation or humiliation of individuals based on their identity. This can include offensive comments, personal attacks or spreading harmful rumors.
- **Stereotypes:** Spread of oversimplified and generalized beliefs about a particular group of people, which can reinforce prejudices and prejudices.
- **Exclusion:** Deliberately isolating or marginalizing individuals or groups by limiting their participation or visibility on a given platform.
- **Disinformation:** Dissemination of false or misleading information in order to fuel prejudice and discriminatory attitudes.

- **Biased Algorithms:** Deploying algorithms that prioritize or suppress content based on identity characteristics, resulting in unequal visibility or representation.
- **Invasion of privacy:** Targeting individuals or groups for invasion of privacy or doxing, an act of disclosing personal information without consent, often used as a form of harassment.

In today's increasingly digital society, digital outsiders can experience significant difficulties, from missing out on social interactions to not having access to important information and services. Efforts to increase digital inclusion often focus on improving access to technology, increasing digital literacy and making social platforms more inclusive and accessible. A social ***digital outsider*** is an individual or group who do not have the access, skills, or necessary resources to participate effectively in online social platforms. Lack of inclusion can be due to various factors, such as economic inequality, lack of technological infrastructure, insufficient digital literacy or social and cultural barriers. Key characteristics of digital underdogs include:

- **Limited access:** The inability to access digital devices or reliable, high-speed Internet due to economic or geographic limitations, often referred to as the "digital divide."
- **Lack of digital literacy:** Limited understanding of how to use digital tools and navigate social networks effectively. This may include a lack of knowledge of basic usage, online safety, privacy protection or the skills needed to recognize credible information.
- **Socio-cultural barriers:** Barriers to participation due to social, cultural or linguistic differences that make some platforms inaccessible or unwelcoming.
- **Intentional isolation:** Disregard or neglect by the platform or its models and algorithms, resulting in content that does not meet the user's needs or preferences.
- **Privacy concerns:** Refusal to participate in social networks due to concerns about data misuse, surveillance or cybercrime.
- **Accessibility difficulties:** Challenges that people with disabilities face in accessing or navigating social networks due to the lack of inclusive design.

Learning skills to deal with discriminatory behavior, digital alienation and related challenges is extremely important in today's complex and interconnected world.

As society becomes more diverse and technology continues to shape our daily lives, it is crucial that young people have the tools they need to effectively deal with these issues. Reasons why skill training in these areas is essential:

- **Promoting inclusion and equality:** Discriminatory behavior, such as racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of prejudice, undermines the principles of equality and inclusion. Skills training empowers people to recognize and challenge these behaviors, promoting a more inclusive and just society. By developing skills such as empathy, active listening and conflict resolution, people can effectively deal with discrimination and promote a culture of respect and acceptance.
- **Creating safe and inclusive spaces:** Social networks have become an integral part of our lives, offering opportunities for communication, collaboration and self-expression. However, they can also be a breeding ground for discriminatory behavior and online harassment. Skills training provides young people with strategies to deal with and prevent cyberbullying, trolling, hate speech and other forms of digital exclusion. By fostering a culture of digital citizenship and empathy, safer online spaces can be created where everyone feels valued and respected.
- **Improving interpersonal relations:** Discrimination and prejudice can strain interpersonal relations, leading to misunderstandings, conflicts and divisions. Skills training equips people with effective communication techniques, conflict resolution strategies and cross-cultural understanding. These skills help bridge differences and promote dialogue, enabling youth to connect and collaborate across backgrounds, cultures and beliefs.
- **Empowering bystander intervention:** Often youth witness discriminatory behavior or acts of injustice but feel unsure how to intervene. Skills training provides bystanders with the knowledge and tools to safely and effectively respond to such situations. By empowering bystanders to speak out, challenge discrimination and provide support, we create a collective effort to fight prejudice and create positive change.
- **Building critical thinking and media literacy:** It is essential to develop critical thinking and media literacy skills for young people to navigate the vast amount of information and perspectives available. Skills training helps young people to recognize bias, misinformation and propaganda, enabling them to make informed judgements, informed choices and recognize discriminatory behavior. By promoting media literacy, we can

counter digital alienation and cultivate a more informed and engaged citizenry.

- **Improving the work environment:** Discrimination and bias in the workplace can hinder productivity, limit creativity and harm employee well-being. Anti-discrimination, equality and inclusion skills training gives employers and employees the knowledge and tools to create an inclusive work environment. By valuing diversity, combating bias and promoting equal opportunity, organizations can reap the benefits of a diverse workforce and foster innovation and collaboration.
- **Promoting empowerment:** Skills training helps people develop resilience and empowerment in the face of discriminatory behaviour. It provides tools and strategies to deal with the emotional impact of discrimination, enabling people to assert their rights, advocate for themselves and seek support when needed. By building resilience, young people can cope more effectively with challenging situations and maintain their well-being in the face of adversity.
- **Addressing unconscious biases:** Skills training raises awareness of the unconscious biases that influence our perceptions, judgments, and behavior. It helps to recognize these biases in yourself and others. By encouraging self-reflection and providing bias mitigation techniques, skills training promotes fair and impartial decision-making processes, whether in personal interactions, recruitment practices, or policy development.
- **Maintaining cultural competence:** In a globalized world with diverse communities and cross-cultural interactions, cultural competence is vital. Skills training promotes cultural understanding, appreciation and sensitivity, enabling people to navigate cultural differences respectfully and effectively. By promoting cultural competence, we can break down barriers, build bridges between communities, and create a more harmonious and interconnected world.
- **Promoting interaction and solidarity:** Skills training encourages young people to become more open in their relationships and to be in solidarity with marginalized groups. The training gives young people how to use their privilege, voice and resources to support those facing discrimination. By fostering alliances, skills training helps create collective efforts to challenge systemic discrimination and work for a fairer and more just society.

- **Helping to maintain good mental health and well-being:** Discrimination and digital exclusion can have a detrimental impact on mental health and well-being. Skills training provides people with coping mechanisms, stress management techniques and self-care strategies to protect their mental health in the face of discriminatory behavior or online negativity. By prioritizing mental health and wellbeing, skills training contributes to the overall resilience and flourishing of individuals and communities.
- **Adapting to technological advances:** As technology continues to evolve, new challenges arise related to discrimination, privacy, security and online ethics. Skills training ensures that people keep up with the latest trends and developments, empowering them to navigate the digital landscape responsibly. By staying informed and adaptable, people can make informed decisions, protect their privacy, and use technology to create positive change.

Learning skills to address discriminatory behavior, digital alienation and related challenges is critical to creating an inclusive, just and harmonious society. By equipping people with the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes, we can collectively challenge discrimination, promote empathy and understanding and build a better future for all. Teaching skills to address discriminatory behavior, digital alienation and related challenges is essential to promoting inclusion, promoting equality and building a society where everyone can thrive. By investing in these skills, we can create a more compassionate, just and interconnected world for current and future generations.

Discriminatory Behavior

Discriminatory behavior refers to actions or attitudes that unfairly and negatively target individuals or groups based on certain characteristics or attributes, such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or other protected characteristics. It involves treating someone differently, often with prejudice or bias, which can lead to unequal opportunities, exclusion and harm to targeted individuals or groups. Discriminatory behavior can manifest itself in a variety of ways, including:

- **Verbal abuse:** Using abusive language, insults or derogatory remarks to humiliate and insult individuals based on their characteristics.

- **Exclusion and segregation:** Intentionally excluding or isolating individuals or groups from participation in activities, services or opportunities available to others.
- **Stereotyping:** Making generalized assumptions about individuals or groups based on their characteristics without considering their unique qualities and abilities.
- **Harassment:** Engaging in persistent and unwanted behavior, verbally, physically, or through other means, that creates a hostile environment for targeted individuals.
- **Unequal treatment:** Giving different levels of treatment or opportunities to individuals based on their characteristics, resulting in unfair advantages or disadvantages.
- **Employment discrimination:** Making employment-related decisions, such as hiring, promotion, or termination, based on discriminatory factors rather than merit and qualifications.
- **Hate crimes:** Committing criminal acts against individuals or groups motivated by prejudice or bias, often resulting in physical or emotional harm.

It is essential to address and oppose discriminatory behavior in all its forms in order to promote a fair, just and inclusive society. Anti-discrimination laws and policies are implemented in many countries to protect individuals from unfair treatment based on their characteristics and to ensure equal opportunities and rights for all members of society. Furthermore, promoting education, empathy and open dialogue can help combat discriminatory attitudes and foster a more tolerant and accepting community. Creating an environment where diversity is respected and honored is key to eradicating discriminatory behavior and building a more harmonious and just world.

It is crucial to recognize that being a digital outsider is a subjective experience and can vary greatly from person to person. Some people may actively choose to remain on the fringes of the digital world, while others may face external barriers that prevent them from fully participating. The concept of being a digital outsider also intersects with the broader notion of the digital divide. Digital discrimination refers to differences in access to digital technologies and the internet between different population groups, such as those based on socio-economic status, geography, age or education levels. Tackling digital discrimination and promoting digital inclusion is essential to ensure that

everyone can benefit from the opportunities, resources and connections that the digital space offers. Overall, acknowledging and understanding the experiences of digital outsiders is vital to creating a more inclusive digital environment that accommodates diverse perspectives, experiences and needs in the digital age.

The rise of social networks has changed the way we communicate, bringing people from different parts of the world closer together. These platforms have undoubtedly enriched our lives by facilitating real-time connections, enabling us to share experiences and foster online communities. However, as we immerse ourselves in the digital realm, there is growing concern about unintended consequences, particularly social isolation. Ironically, while social networks promise greater connectivity, they can inadvertently lead to social isolation and a sense of disconnection from the physical world. Here are some factors that contribute to this problem:

- **Digital addiction:** Constant engagement with social media can lead to digital addiction, where people constantly check their devices, seeking validation through likes and comments. This addiction can lead to a decrease in face-to-face interactions and meaningful relationships with loved ones. Digital addiction, also known as technology addiction or internet addiction, is a term used to describe a behavioral disorder characterized by excessive and compulsive use of digital devices and online platforms. It refers to the uncontrollable and constant desire to work with digital technologies, which leads to negative consequences in various aspects of an individual's life.
- **Filtered reality:** Social networks often present an idealized version of people's lives, where the focus is on sharing the most interesting and positive moments. This filtered reality can lead to feelings of inadequacy and loneliness as people compare their lives to the seemingly perfect lives of others.
- **Reduction of in-person communication:** Over-reliance on social networks can reduce opportunities for in-person communication, as people may prefer virtual communication to face-to-face conversations. This lack of real human connection can contribute to feelings of isolation.
- **The online disinhibition effect:** The anonymity and distance that social networks provide can lead to the online disinhibition effect, where people are more likely to express themselves in ways they would not in an offline environment. This can lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and ultimately withdrawal from online interactions.

Coping with social isolation

Social media has undoubtedly transformed the way we connect and share information, opening up a world of possibilities. However, we must be aware of the potential negative consequences, including social isolation. Steps for overcoming social isolation include:

- **Digital detox:** Taking periodic breaks from social media can help restore a healthy balance between online and offline life. Disconnecting from screens allows people to focus on building meaningful relationships in the physical world;
- **Smart use of social media:** Encouraging users to be mindful of their social media habits can contribute to a healthier online experience. This includes being aware of the emotional impact of social media and setting limits on its use;
- **Making real-life connections:** young people should be involved in social activities, clubs or community events that match their interests. Building relationships with like-minded people in the real world can alleviate feelings of isolation;
- **Prioritize in-person communication:** Encourage friends and family members to prioritize face-to-face conversations and spending quality time together. Making time for meaningful interactions offline can strengthen connections and combat social isolation.

By striking a balance between online and offline interactions and being mindful of our use of social networks, we can harness the benefits of these platforms while fostering genuine connections in the real world. In this way, we can create a more fulfilling and socially connected life for ourselves and others.



PROGRAM 11: SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

TRAINING METHODS AND ACTIONS

STEP INTO THE ROLE OF THE SOCIALLY EXCLUDED

Activity: role play with discussion

Duration: 60 min.

Instruction: Divide students into 3 groups:

- **First subgroup:** play the role of socially isolated youth
- **Second subgroup:** play the role of socially active youth
- **Third subgroup:** play the role of oppressors and discriminate youth

This activity puts young people in a situation of oppression or discrimination and makes them share their impressions of these experiences. The activity requires the moderator to know the group and be able to lead activities with elements of theatrical dramatization. It is recommended to start with some preparatory games to break the ice for a better working atmosphere. This activity is possible with up to four real-life discrimination action scenarios, in which a maximum of four groups conducts short role-plays. Participants will not know in advance which role will be discriminated against, so careful consideration should be given to the allocation of roles. In the discussion that follows the role-play, participants and viewers should begin by describing their feelings from the short scenes before continuing with an analysis of how everyday discrimination affects certain groups or individuals.

LET'S GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER!

Activity: training exercise

Duration: 30 min

Instruction: A group session with "ice breaker" activities included to create a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. This helps participants get to know each other and encourages social interaction. Each participant describes himself on a piece of paper with:

- 3 words
- 1 animal
- 1 color

Participants line up in a circle. After each participant is ready, they place the sheet facing the other participants. A discussion is held to familiarize the participants: Why exactly these words, animal and color.

PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

Activity: role play

Duration: 60 min.

Instruction: Socialization groups are those groups where participants face real challenges or life situations can come together to provide mutual support. These groups offer a safe space for young people to share their experiences, get advice and develop a support network. The participants are divided into equal numbers of groups:

- **Group One:** tasked with playing socially excluded young people who do well in school, do not have a profile on any social network and are shunned by other classmates because they are boring.
- **Group Two:** has the task of being a bystander and recording what he sees as the dynamics and communication between the groups, describing mistakes and correct communication skills.
- **Group Three:** has the task of playing socially active young people who are liked at school, have profiles on all social networks, have intolerant behavior and attitudes towards others.

After each group plays the given role and the observers describe what they see, there is an observer-led discussion: what they saw in behavior. They answer questions:

- Why is the behavior the way it is?
- Are the different ones dangerous?

EMBRACING DIGITAL INCLUSION EXERCISE-GAME

Activity: game

Duration: 60 min.

Objective: The Embracing Digital Inclusion game-exercise aims to raise awareness of the challenges faced by digital outsiders and explore strategies to overcome these barriers. Participants will engage in interactive activities and discussions to promote empathy, understanding and practical solutions to promote digital inclusion.

Materials:

- Flipchart or whiteboard with markers
- Index cards or sticky notes
- Timer or stopwatch
- Laptop/ computer with internet access (optional)

Instructions:

1. Gather the participants in a circle and explain the purpose of the game-exercise: to explore the experiences of digital outsiders and find ways to promote digital inclusion.
2. Facilitate a brief discussion on the concept of digital outsiders, sharing common challenges they may face in the digital space and how these challenges may affect their lives.
3. Emphasize the importance of empathy and understanding in creating a more inclusive digital environment.

DIGITAL OUTSIDER EMPATHY

Activity: exercise**Duration:** 15 min.**Instructions:**

- Provide each participant with an index card or sticky note.
- Instruct participants to imagine they are a digital outsider and write down one challenge or barrier they might face in the digital space on their map.
- Collect the cards anonymously and shuffle them.
- Distribute the cards randomly to the participants, making sure that everyone gets a challenge different from their own.
- Ask each participant to read aloud the given challenge and express their thoughts and feelings about the particular situation.

OVERCOME DIGITAL ISOLATION

Activity: brainstorming**Duration:** 15 min.

Instructions:

- Hold a brainstorming session, encouraging participants to propose practical solutions and strategies to overcome the challenges identified in the previous exercise
- Record the ideas on the flipchart or whiteboard.
- Discuss how these solutions can promote digital inclusion and create a more welcoming digital space for outsiders.

THE JOURNEY OF THE DIGITAL OUTSIDER

Activity: role-playing game**Duration:** 15 min.

Introduction: Through this game-based exercise, participants gain a deeper appreciation for the experience of digital outsiders and explore tangible ways to promote digital inclusion. By fostering empathy, understanding and collaborative solutions, we can bridge the gap and create a more inclusive digital world where everyone feels welcome and valued.

Characters: Alex - The Digital Outsider, Sarah - Friendly social networker, Chris - Cyber Bully, Moderator - Roleplay host.

Instructions: Assign roles and let each participant empathize with their role and get into the character of their character. The purpose of the exercise is to get a feel for the world of the digital outsider and to understand how one can help.

Digital Inclusion Action Plan (5 minutes):

- Engage all stakeholders in creating an action plan to promote digital inclusion in their own lives and communities.
- Encourage them to set specific, achievable goals and commit to implementing at least one action to make a positive difference in the digital space.

Conclusion (5 minutes): Summarize the key takeaways from the game exercise, highlighting the importance of empathy, understanding and collective efforts to promote digital inclusion.

SOCIAL GATHERING WITHOUT INCLUSION

Activity: social event game

Duration: one day

Objective: The purpose is to create an opportunity for participants to engage in meaningful face-to-face interactions and enhance their sense of community.

Instructions:

1. Host a social gathering or event, such as a picnic, game night, or group outing, where participants are encouraged to put away their digital devices for the duration of the event.
2. Make the activities interactive that encourage real conversations and connections between participants.
3. After the event, encourage participants to share their thoughts and feelings about the experience, especially regarding the impact of digital disconnection.

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE ONLINE COMMUNITY

Activity: brainstorm

Duration: 45 min.

Objective: To promote positive and supportive interactions in social networks to combat social isolation.

Instructions:

1. Divide the participants into small groups and assign each group a specific social network platform (e.g. Instagram, Twitter, Facebook).
2. Ask each group to brainstorm ways to create a more inclusive and encouraging online community on their designated platform.
3. Each group should present their ideas to the rest of the participants, focusing on strategies to combat cyberbullying, promote positive content and help each other online.
4. Encourage participants to apply some of these strategies to their own social media profiles and share their experiences in subsequent sessions.

ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

Activity: Self-Assessment

Duration: 45 min.

Self-esteem is a positive or negative orientation towards oneself. People are motivated to have high self-esteem, which is an indicator of a positive self-regard, not selfishness. Self-esteem, along with self-efficacy and identity, is one of the components of self-concept, which Rosenberg defines as "the totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings about himself as an object." The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a 10-item unidimensional scale designed to measure personal worth, self-confidence, self-satisfaction, self-esteem, and self-judgment (example items: "I am capable of doing as well as most people"; "Sometimes I feel my worthlessness very clearly"). The students express their opinion using a 5-point Likert scale from 1-completely disagree to 5-completely agree. Items No. 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 should be recoded.

Scoring: Items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored. Give "Strongly Disagree" 1 point, "Disagree" 2 points, "Agree" 3 points, and "Strongly Agree" 4 points. Sum scores for all ten items. Keep scores on a continuous scale. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem.

1. In general, I am satisfied with myself

Completely false	Rather false	As true as false	Rather true	Absolutely true
1	2	3	4	5

2. Sometimes I think I'm good for nothing

Completely false	Rather false	As true as false	Rather true	Absolutely true
1	2	3	4	5

3. I think I have a number of good qualities

Completely false	Rather false	As true as false	Rather true	Absolutely true
1	2	3	4	5

4. I can do as well as most people

Completely false	Rather false	As true as false	Rather true	Absolutely true
1	2	3	4	5

5. It seems to me that I have nothing to be particularly proud of

Completely false	Rather false	As true as false	Rather true	Absolutely true
1	2	3	4	5

6. Sometimes I feel my worthlessness very clearly

Completely false	Rather false	As true as false	Rather true	Absolutely true
1	2	3	4	5

7. I feel no less valuable than others

Completely false	Rather false	As true as false	Rather true	Absolutely true
1	2	3	4	5

8. I would like to have more self-respect

Completely false	Rather false	As true as false	Rather true	Absolutely true
1	2	3	4	5

9. I tend to see myself as a loser

Completely false	Rather false	As true as false	Rather true	Absolutely true
1	2	3	4	5

10. I think I treat myself well

Completely false	Rather false	As true as false	Rather true	Absolutely true
1	2	3	4	5

UNDERSTANDING DISCRIMINATION & COPING SKILLS

Activity: Case study

Duration: 60 min.

Objective: To gain a deeper understanding of the different forms of discrimination and their impact.

Instructions: Read and discuss the case study about discrimination in different contexts. In small groups, identify the different types of discrimination that are present. Engage in a group discussion to explore the effects of discrimination on individuals and society. Discuss personal experiences or observations of discrimination individually and share your findings with the group.

Case: Sara is a 25-year-old professional working in a large corporate organization. She has recently joined a diverse team where people from different cultural backgrounds collaborate on projects. Although Sarah values different perspectives and experiences, she has seen instances of discriminatory behavior within the team. Some team members make offensive remarks, dismiss others' ideas based on stereotypes, and exclude certain individuals from important discussions. Sarah believes it is important to address these issues in order to foster a more inclusive and respectful work environment. Eager to make a positive difference, she decided to apply the skills she had acquired during a training program to address discriminatory behavior. One day, during a team meeting, colleague Ahmed, a man from the Middle East, suggests an innovative approach to solving a project challenge. However, another member of the team, Mark, immediately rejects Ahmed's idea, stating that people from his cultural background do not have the necessary skills and experience. Sarah notices the discomfort on Ahmed's face and realizes that this is an opportunity to apply her newly acquired skills in dealing with discriminatory behavior.

Actions taken:

- *Recognizing discriminatory behavior:* Sarah quickly recognizes Mark's statement as an example of discriminatory behavior based on cultural stereotypes. She recognizes the negative impact it can have on Ahmed's confidence, input and team dynamics.
- *Active listening and empathy:* Sarah decides to actively listen to Ahmed's point of view and understand how he feels about this situation. She approaches Ahmed after the meeting and provides him with a safe space to

share his thoughts and emotions. She empathizes with him, acknowledging the impact of discriminatory remarks and how it can be discouraging.

- **Assertive Communication:** Armed with her training, Sarah decides to respond to discriminatory behavior in an assertive manner. In a calm and respectful manner, she addresses Mark privately and expresses her concern about his comment, highlighting the negative effect it has had on Ahmed and the team dynamic. Sarah emphasizes the importance of valuing diversity and ensuring equal opportunities for all.
- **Providing support and validation:** Sarah affirms her support for Ahmed and his ideas. She encourages him to continue to contribute his unique perspectives and reassures him that his voice matters on the team. Sarah also offers to provide guidance and help to Ahmed to effectively demonstrate the value of his ideas.
- **Whistleblowing and seeking protection:** Ahmed turns to the Commission for help: If discriminatory behavior continues or escalates, Sarah is prepared to report the incident to her team leader or to Human Resources, ensuring that appropriate channels were used to resolve the issue and promote a respectful work environment.

Results and impact:

- Sarah's proactive approach and application of skills to deal with discriminatory behavior yielded positive results:
- Increased awareness: By addressing the incident, Sarah raises awareness within the team about the importance of inclusive and respectful communication, encouraging others to reflect on their own behavior and prejudices.
- Empowerment of the person affected: Ahmed feels validated and supported, gaining the confidence to continue sharing his ideas and experiences without fear of discrimination. This enables him to contribute more effectively within the team.
- Positive Team Dynamics: Sarah's intervention sets a precedent for respectful and inclusive interaction. Team members become more mindful of their language and actions, fostering a healthier work environment where diversity is celebrated.
- Change in organizational culture: Sarah's actions contribute to a wider change in the culture of the organization by promoting diversity, equality and inclusion as core values. Other teams and individuals observe the positive

change and are inspired to tackle discriminatory behavior in their respective areas.

Conclusion: Sarah's case exemplifies the power of coping skills to create positive change in the work environment. Through recognizing discriminatory behavior, active listening, assertive communication and providing support, Sarah demonstrates how people can address discrimination and promote inclusion. Her actions not only empower the person they target, but also inspire others to embrace diversity and oppose discriminatory behavior. By continually applying these skills, organizations can foster a culture of respect, equality and innovation that benefits both employees and the overall success of the organization.

RECOGNIZING DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOR

Activity: role-playing exercise

Duration: 60 min.

Objective: Increase the participants' ability to recognize and deal with discriminatory acts.

Instructions: Provide participants with a list of statements that involve discriminatory behavior. In pairs or small groups, analyze each scenario and identify the discriminating elements present. Engage in role-playing exercises in which participants practice recognizing and responding assertively to discriminatory behavior. Start the group discussion to share insights, challenges, and strategies for effectively dealing with discriminatory behavior.

List of potential allegations that may involve discriminatory conduct:

- A manager consistently denies promotions or career development opportunities to employees of a particular racial or ethnic background.
- An employee is subjected to insulting and humiliating comments about his gender or sexual orientation by his colleagues.
- A landlord refuses to rent an apartment to a person based on his religious beliefs.
- An employer pays employees of a certain gender less than their counterparts for the same work and qualifications.
- A teacher consistently neglects and rejects students with disabilities, providing them with fewer educational resources and opportunities.

- An employee is rejected for an international assignment because of his national origin, despite having the necessary skills and qualifications.
- A customer is refused service in a restaurant based on their appearance or disability.
- A person is subjected to online harassment and cyberbullying because of his race, religion or sexual orientation.
- A club or organization excludes individuals based on their socioeconomic status or disability.
- A health care provider refuses to offer necessary medical treatment or services based on the patient's gender identity or immigration status.

EMPATHY BUILDING

Activity: pair exercise

Duration: 30 min.

Objective: Cultivate empathy and active listening skills to better understand the experiences of people who face discrimination.

Instructions: Conduct the exercise in which participants are encouraged to empathize with a person who has experienced discrimination. Put participants into pairs and facilitate active listening exercises where one participant shares a personal experience with discrimination, and another actively listens without interruption. Discuss the emotions, perspectives, and insights gained during the exercise as a group. Encourage participants to reflect on how active listening and empathy can contribute to addressing discriminatory behavior.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN CASE OF DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOR

Activity: case study

Duration: 60 min.

Objective: Improve participants' communication skills to effectively deal with discriminatory behavior.

Instructions: Provide participants with a case study of effective communication in a situation of discriminatory behavior. In pairs or small groups, role-play conversations in which one participant presents a person exhibiting discriminatory behavior and other practices assertively and respectfully addressing the behavior. Hold a debriefing discussion in which participants share

their experiences, challenges they faced, and effective strategies used during the role plays. Discuss and provide feedback on effective communication techniques that promote inclusion and respect.

Case: Emily works as a project manager at a multinational corporation known for its commitment to diversity and inclusion. While the organization strives to create an inclusive work environment, Emily recently became aware of a situation involving discriminatory behavior. One of her team members, Javier, who is of Latin American descent, is constantly on the receiving end of offensive comments and microaggressions from another team member, Rachel. Concerned about the impact on Javier and the team dynamic, Emily decides to deal with the situation by using effective communication strategies. During a team meeting, Rachel makes a comment mocking Javier's accent, which makes him visibly uncomfortable. Emily, realizing the importance of dealing with this incident immediately and appropriately, decided to use effective communication skills to deal with the discriminatory behavior.

Actions taken:

- **Active listening and empathy:** Emily actively listens to Javier's concerns and emotions regarding the incident. She makes sure Javier feels heard, validated and supported in sharing his experiences.
- **One-on-One:** Emily turns to Rachel privately, out of the middle of the meeting, to address the issue. She does this to create a safe space for open and honest communication.
- **Choosing an appropriate approach:** Emily takes a non-confrontational and non-blaming approach when discussing the incident with Rachel. She focused on the impact of Rachel's comment instead of attacking her personally.
- **Assertive communication:** Emily expresses her concerns directly to Rachel, explaining how her comment affected Javier and emphasizing the importance of respectful and inclusive team communication.
- **Setting boundaries:** Emily sets clear expectations for team behavior and emphasizes that discriminatory behavior will not be tolerated. She communicates the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion, reinforcing the importance of treating everyone with respect.
- **Provide resources and support:** Emily refers Rachel to educational resources, training programs, or consulting services within the organization to help her develop a better understanding of diversity and inclusive practices. She encourages Rachel to seek guidance and support.

- **Follow-up and monitoring:** Emily regularly checks in on Javier to ensure his well-being and to assess any improvements in team dynamics. It remains vigilant and ready to take further action if discriminatory behavior continues.

Results and impact: Emily's effective communication approach produces positive results:

- **Recognition and awareness:** Rachel realizes the impact of her comment and recognizes the need for more inclusive behavior. She expresses remorse and apologizes to Javier.
- **Team unity and trust:** The team notices Emily's proactive approach and appreciates her commitment to creating an inclusive work environment. This strengthens the sense of unity, trust and mutual respect among team members.
- **Empowering the target individual:** Javier feels supported, valued and empowered in the team. He acknowledges that his concerns were heard and addressed, resulting in increased confidence and willingness to contribute openly.
- **Improved communication:** The incident serves as a catalyst for better communication and understanding within the team. Team members become more aware of their language and behavior, which ensures a more polite and inclusive work environment.
- **Change in organizational culture:** Emily's actions contribute to a broader cultural change in the organization by strengthening its commitment to diversity and inclusion. It sends a strong message that discriminatory behavior will not be tolerated, creating the conditions for continued progress and positive change.

Conclusion: Effective communication plays a critical role in addressing discriminatory behavior in the workplace. By actively listening, empathizing, and applying assertive communication strategies, individuals like Emily can effectively deal with such incidents, foster understanding, and foster an inclusive work environment. This case study highlights the importance of timely intervention, training and setting clear expectations to create positive change in teams and organizations. Through sustained effort and open communication, we can create workplaces where diversity is respected, valued and celebrated.

BUILDING RESILIENCE AND ASSERTIVENESS

Activity: discussion

Duration: 30 min.

Objective: The purpose is for participants to have strategies for building resilience and self-empowerment when faced with discrimination.

Instructions:

- Introduce different coping mechanisms, such as mindfulness, journaling, or introspection exercises.
- Guide participants in a resilience-building activity, such as identifying personal strengths and creating affirmations.
- Have a discussion about self-affirmation strategies, including seeking support, setting boundaries, and cultivating self-care practices.
- Encourage participants to share personal experiences of resilience and assertiveness in the face of discrimination.

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

Activity: brainstorm

Duration: 30 min.

Objective: To provide participants with strategies for creating inclusive spaces and promoting diversity, equality and inclusion.

Instructions: Hold a brainstorming session to generate ideas for promoting inclusion in different settings, such as workplaces, schools or community organizations. Form small groups and assign each group a specific environment to focus on. In the relevant groups, develop action plans and strategies to promote inclusion in the designated environment. Share and discuss action plans as a larger group, identifying common themes and best practices for creating an inclusive environment.

LEGAL ASPECTS OF NORMATIVE COMPETENCE

Activity: exercise

Duration: 30 min.

Objective: Educate participants on relevant laws, policies and regulatory mechanisms related to discriminatory behavior.

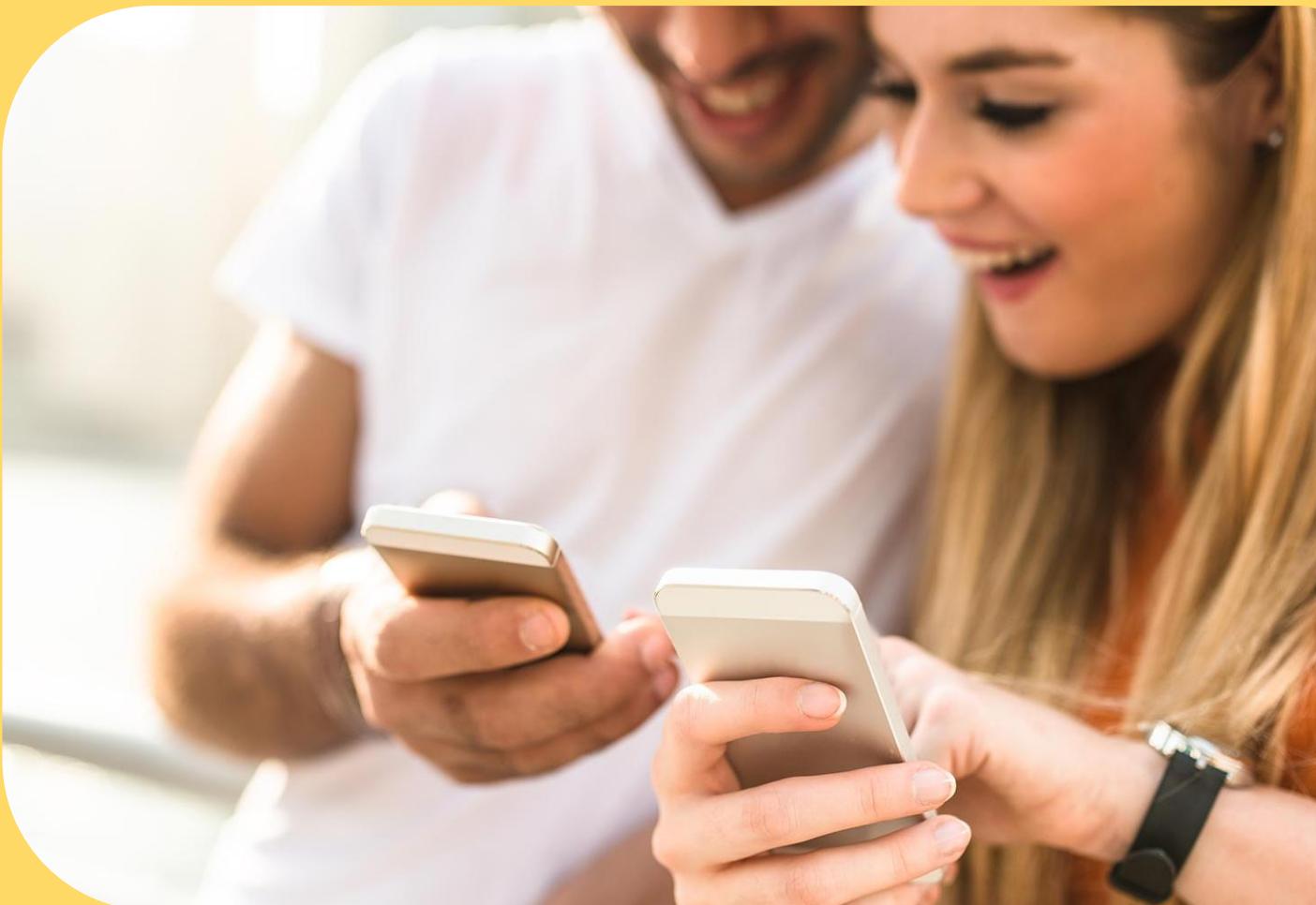
Instructions:

- Present an overview of legal frameworks and policies relating to discrimination in different contexts (e.g., employment, education, public spaces).
- Share information about reporting mechanisms, support organizations and resources available to those experiencing discrimination.
- Have the discussion about the importance of statutory protection and rights when a person faces discriminatory behavior.
- Encourage participants to share personal experiences related to the legal aspects and reporting of discrimination.

PROGRAM 12:

DANGEROUS

VIRAL TRENDS



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PROGRAM 12: DANGEROUS VIRAL TRENDS

Distinguishing dangerous trends and risky behavior

Adolescence is defined as the years between the onset of puberty and the onset of adulthood. In the past, when people were likely to marry in their early 20s or younger, that period might have lasted only 10 years or less, starting around age 12 to 13 and ending at age 20, by which time the child has found a job or gone to work on the family farm, married, and started a family of their own. Today's youth are maturing more slowly, leaving home at a later age, and maintaining relationships with their parents longer. For example, youth may go to college but still receive financial support from parents and may come home on weekends or even live there for extended periods of time. Thus, the period between puberty and adulthood can last until the late 20s, merging with adulthood itself. In fact, it is now appropriate to consider the period of adolescence and that of emerging adulthood (the ages between 18 and mid- or late 20s) together.

During adolescence, a child continues to grow physically, cognitively, and emotionally, transforming from a child to an adult. The body grows rapidly in size and the sexual and reproductive organs become fully functional. At the same time, as adolescents develop more advanced patterns of reasoning and a stronger sense of self, they seek to forge their own identities, developing important attachments to people other than their parents. Especially in Western societies where the need to build new independence is critical^{181,182}, this period can be stressful for many children as it involves new emotions, the need to develop new social relationships and growing sense of responsibility and independence.

Although adolescence can be a stressful time for many teens, most of them cope with trials and turbulations successfully. For example, the majority of adolescents experiment with alcohol sometime before high school graduation. Although many will have been drunk at least once, relatively few teenagers will develop long-term drinking problems or allow alcohol to adversely affect their school or personal relationships. Similarly, many teenagers break the law during adolescence, but very few young people develop criminal careers¹⁸³. However, these facts do not mean that using drugs or alcohol is a good idea. Recreational drug use can have significant negative consequences, and the likelihood of these problems (including dependence, addiction, and even brain damage) is significantly greater for young adults who start using drugs at an early age.

Adolescents often appear to act impulsively rather than thoughtfully, and this may be in part because the development of the prefrontal cortex is generally slower than the development of the emotional parts of the brain, including the limbic system¹⁸⁴. Additionally, the hormonal surge associated with puberty, which primarily affects emotional responses, can create strong emotions and lead to impulsive behavior. It has been hypothesized that adolescents may engage in risky behaviors, such as smoking, drug use, dangerous driving, and unprotected sex, in part because they have not yet fully acquired the mental capacity to curb impulsive behavior or make fully rational judgments¹⁸⁵.

Social development in adolescence

Some of the most important changes that occur during adolescence include the further development of the self-concept and the development of new attachments. While young children are most strongly attached to their parents, adolescents' important attachments move increasingly away from parents and increasingly toward peers¹⁸⁶. As a result, parental influence decreases at this stage.

The main social task of the adolescent is the search for a unique identity - the ability to answer the question "Who am I?" In the search for an identity, the adolescent may experience role confusion in which he or she balances or chooses between identities, accepts negative or undesirable identities, or temporarily gives up the search for an identity altogether if things are not going well.

One approach to assessing identity development¹⁸⁷ was proposed by James Marcia in 1980. In his approach, adolescents are asked questions about their research and engagement with issues related to occupation, politics, religion, and sexual behavior. Answers to the questions allow the researchers to classify the adolescent into one of four identity categories (see table below):

Table 5. Adolescent identity classification, according to James Marcia¹⁸⁸

State of Identity Diffusion	The person does not have firm commitments regarding specific issues and does not make progress in achieving them.
A state of exclusion	The person has not experimented with their identity and has established their identity based on the choices or values of others.

Monitoring Status	The person is exploring various options but has not yet made a clear commitment to any of them.
Identity Attainment Status	The individual has achieved a coherent and committed identity based on personal decisions.

Studies assessing teenagers' passage through the Marcia stages show that although most teens eventually develop a stable identity, the path to it is not always easy and there are many paths that can be taken. Some teenagers may simply accept their parents' beliefs, or the first role offered to them, perhaps at the expense of seeking out other, more promising opportunities (closure status). Other teenagers may spend years trying out different possible identities (moratorium status) before finally choosing one¹⁸⁹.

The role of social networks

Social media encourages outrageous behavior, and the more outrageous it is, the greater the opportunities for bragging rights. It's a fast-paced, impulsive environment, and the fear of missing out is real for teenagers. This environment affects teenagers' underdeveloped ability to think about their actions and possible consequences.

The role of parents

Parents must help teens build mental potential and a better thinking pattern. The recommendations include¹⁹⁰:

- To start the conversation, ask your children about the biggest challenges they have heard about in their circle of friends. Encourage them to see if they can surprise you. Ask them (calmly and non-judgmentally) what they think about the challenge. This helps build a risk assessment skill by talking about what might happen to someone who takes on the challenge. You can still exercise your parental rights, such as limiting contact with certain children or prohibiting certain activities.
- If your child mentions that they are interested in participating in a challenge, use open-ended questions to encourage them to think through each step of the challenge. Ask them to consider the worst possible outcome as well. Ask them to think about why they would do it and whether it is worth doing. Are Likes and Comments Worth ER Hours?

- Don't forget to "friend" your youngsters on social networks. Staying connected on their preferred communication platforms can help you keep up with what's going on in their daily lives. Watch their stories for clues about what's going on at school and with their friends. Let your youngsters know that if you pay for the device and the wireless network, in return they must befriend you.
- Sometimes young people are more inclined to talk about their peers than about themselves. Asking questions about trends at school, friends, and fashion can yield more answers than direct questions about their own activities. Regardless, it's important to keep the lines of communication open and avoid being judgmental. Instead, calmly discuss the dangers in this election.

In recent years, the widespread use of social networks has revolutionized the way we connect, communicate and share information. While these platforms offer numerous advantages, they have also given rise to worrying trends among young people. The combination of constant connectivity, peer pressure, and a desire for validation has led to risky behavior with serious consequences. Understanding these dangerous trends is critical to ensuring the well-being of the younger generation:

- **Cyberbullying and online harassment:** social media has unfortunately become a place for cyberbullying. Young people seeking recognition and popularity may engage in offending behavior to fit in with society or to retaliate against perceived adversaries. The anonymity provided by these platforms can increase cruelty and reduce empathy, leading to severe emotional and psychological harm.
- **Addiction to social media:** Addiction to social networks is an increasingly serious problem. Constant notifications, likes and comments trigger dopamine responses in the brain, making users crave more engagement. This addiction can lead to decreased productivity, anxiety, and a negative impact on mental health. Young people can fall victim to this cycle, neglecting real-life relationships and responsibilities.
- **Oversharing and privacy threats:** Sharing personal information and experiences on social networks can be problematic, especially for young people, who may not be fully aware of the consequences of their actions. Over-sharing can lead to privacy violations, identity theft, and even physical risks of revealing location or other sensitive data. Additionally,

online predators often take advantage of such personal information to target vulnerable youth.

- **Problems with self-perception and self-esteem:** social media enforces an unrealistic standard of beauty, leading to body image issues among young people. Filters, photo editing and carefully selected profiles create unrealistic expectations, causing feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem. The pressure to gain validation through likes and comments may also prompt young users to seek validation through risky or inappropriate means.
- **Dangerous challenges and trends (Viral Trends):** The viral nature of social networks creates dangerous challenges and trends that spread rapidly among young users. These challenges can lead to serious injury or even death, from the harmless but silly to the downright dangerous. The desire to be part of a trend and gain attention can lead young people to engage in reckless behavior without fully realizing the potential consequences.
- **Exposure to harmful content:** social media provides access to an abundance of content, both positive and negative. Young people who are still developing their critical thinking skills can easily be exposed to harmful ideologies, extremist views and inappropriate content. Without proper guidance and supervision, this exposure can contribute to radicalization, desensitization, or a distorted worldview.

Addressing these dangerous trends requires a collaborative effort by parents, educators, social media companies, and policymakers. Promoting digital literacy and responsible behavior online is paramount. Parents should have open conversations with their youngsters, encouraging healthy internet use and emphasizing the difference between virtual and real life. Schools can include digital citizenship and online safety training in their curricula.

Social networking platforms should implement stricter content moderation policies and algorithms that prioritize user safety over engagement metrics. They must also provide easily accessible resources for reporting and managing harassment or harmful content. Although social networks can serve as powerful tools for communication and connectivity, they also pose significant risks to young people's mental, emotional and physical well-being. Recognizing and addressing these dangerous trends is vital to fostering a safer online environment and fostering the positive potential of social networks for future generations.



PROGRAM 12: DANGEROUS VIRAL TRENDS

TRAINING METHODS AND ACTIONS

IDENTIFYING HARMFUL CONTENT

Activity: exercise

Duration: 30 min.

Objective: To develop critical thinking skills and recognition of harmful content in social networks.

Instructions:

1. Provide participants with a list of posts, videos, or images from various social media platforms.
2. In small groups or individually, participants must analyze each content and identify any elements that may be considered harmful, offensive or dangerous.
3. Encourage participants to consider the potential consequences of sharing or engaging with such content.
4. Hold a group discussion where participants share their observations and reasons for identifying specific content as harmful.
5. Discuss strategies for dealing with harmful content, such as reporting, blocking or seeking support from trusted adults.

BUILDING DIGITAL RESILIENCE

Activity: training exercise

Duration: 30 min.

Objective: To provide young people with skills to navigate the challenges of social networks and to protect themselves from risky behavior.

Instructions:

1. Join the list of users of social networks who are able to take advantage of them
2. Present participants with case studies or scenarios involving common social networking challenges, such as cyberbullying, online peer pressure, or dangerous trends.
3. In groups, have participants brainstorm possible ways to respond to each scenario in a way that promotes digital resilience and safety.

4. Encourage open discussions about the emotions and pressures young people may face when facing such challenges.
5. Conduct role-playing exercises in which participants act out their suggested responses to the scenarios, emphasizing assertiveness, empathy, and responsible decision-making.

CREATING POSITIVE SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

Activity: social media campaign

Duration: 30 min.

Objective: To encourage young people to use social media as a vehicle for positive change and self-expression.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into small teams and assign each team a social issue that concerns them (e.g. mental health, environmental protection, inclusion, etc.).
2. Instruct teams to develop a positive social media campaign targeting their chosen issue. This could include creating engaging posts, videos or infographics.
3. Emphasize the importance of fostering a healthy and supportive online environment while avoiding harmful content.
4. Each team must present their campaign to the other participants, explaining their message and expected impact.
5. Encourage participants to share and support each other's campaigns on their personal social media profiles to reinforce the positive message.

HOW TO PROTECT AGAINST DANGEROUS VIRAL TRENDS?

Activity: Training

Duration: 60 min

Objective: to educate young people about the risks associated with dangerous viral trends on social media and equip them with the knowledge and skills to protect themselves and others from harm.

Instructions: The training can be delivered through a combination of interactive presentations, group discussions, case studies, multimedia presentations and role play exercises. Encourage participants to share their experiences and concerns related to viral trends and provide practical strategies to stay safe.

Activity 1: the educator must show to the students a presentation on:

- Introduction to dangerous viral trends;
- Understanding the concept of viral trends and their potential impact;
- Recognizing the difference between harmless and dangerous trends;
- Exploring real-life examples of harmful viral trends and their consequences;
- Analyzing the risks of viral trends.

Activity 2: students must give their own definitions and opinions on how to:

- Identify potential risks and dangers associated with viral trends;
- Understand the psychological factors behind involvement in dangerous trends;
- Resist the influence of peer pressure and social validation.

Activity 3: using the brainstorming method, participants must describe “What is needed to improve self-esteem and self-worth?”. The educator must:

- Encourage students to prioritize their well-being over social affirmation;
- Encourage healthy online habits and set personal boundaries;
- Teach students to recognize warning signs and red flags.

Activity 4: students must identify warning signs of dangerous trends, such as self-harm or violence. The educator must teach them to:

- recognize signs of distress in others and intervene appropriately;
- Understand when and how to report harmful content on social media platforms;
- Using social media responsibly.

PROGRAM 13:

INFLUENCERS



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PROGRAM 13: INFLUENCERS

Teenagers come to know about the latest things in tech, fashion, style, and many other areas. The chances are that their sources are social media influencers. Also, the chances are that kids' behavior is getting influenced by the social media influencers they follow on their social media handles¹⁹¹.

Who are social media influencers, and what do they do?

Influencers influence people on social media. The influence varies from lifestyle to fashion to many other areas. Social media influencer is a relatively new term, and earlier, many of these people were bloggers. Influencers share the accurate data that they receive among their social media audience. Now, it can have good and bad effects on a child's behavior. It largely depends on the news and the influencer. All in all, there are numerous social media platforms supporting influencers and the culture¹⁹².

Social media influencers (e.g. beauty bloggers, video game vloggers, toy unboxers, instafamous) are extremely popular among minors. Influencers seem to play an important role in minors' lives, first, because minors spend a large part of their time watching, viewing, liking, forwarding, and commenting on influencers' content. As such, the level of involvement with influencer content seems high. Second, minors turn to these influencers not only for entertainment, but also for information, advice, company and comfort. In recent years more research efforts are focused on enhancement of understanding of the role of social media influencers in the lives of children and adolescents. Topics include, but are not limited to¹⁹³:

- Minors' uses and gratifications related to social media influencers;
- Meaning of social media influencers for minors' identity development;
- Identification and parasocial relationships with social media influencers;
- Social media influencers as role models;
- Psychological effects of social media influencer content on minors' well-being (e.g., materialism, body satisfaction);
- Persuasive effects of social media influencers on minors;
- Commercial and (pro)social influencer marketing;
- Legal aspects of social media influencers, including disclosures of influencer marketing;
- The industry behind social media influencers targeting minors;
- Minors as social media influencers;

- Parental attitudes and mediation styles with regard to social media influencers;
- Educating and empowering minors on social media influencers.

What are the problematic areas with influencers and their influence on children?¹⁹⁴

- First, influencers are assumed to be so appealing because they are similar to their audiences. They are often perceived as 'the boy or girl next door' with whom identification is easy. However, there are probably more reasons for the attraction of influencers. Research is needed to unravel the underlying psychological mechanisms that explain the appeal of social media influencers.
- Second, the impact of social media influencers on minors may have both desirable and undesirable consequences. Influencers may inspire minors to behave pro-socially or healthier, but they may also show bad examples of smoking, drinking, or even criminal behavior. In addition, influencer content may also affect minors' psychological well-being, materialism, body satisfaction.
- Third, because social media influencers are assumed to have impact on their audiences, they are also used by third parties for commercial purposes. For example, brands pay influencers to promote products in content that influencers create. Similarly, governments or NGO's turn to influencers to promote healthy, social, or environmentally friendly behavior among minors. Despite the popularity of so-called influencer marketing, theoretical or empirical insights into whether and why influencers are persuasive among minors and which (psychological) mechanisms underlie this, are limited.
- Fourth, some social media influencers are minors themselves. With major brands signing up for paid partnerships, a growing number of child and adolescent influencers (and their parents) are striving to make a profit, which leads to important legal, ethical and philosophical questions.

Social media influencers' distinctive features

"Informational social influence" is a concept that has been used in literature by Deutsch & Gerard¹⁹⁵, and defined as the change in behavior or opinions that happened when people (consumers) are conformed to other people (influencers) because they believe that they have precise and true information^{196,197}. There are two kinds of "influencers"¹⁹⁸. The classic ones are

the scientists, reporters, lawyers, and all other examples of people who have expert-level knowledge and the new ones - the social media influencers.

According to the Psychology of Influence perspective, people, often, do not realize that they are influenced because the effect occurs mainly in their subconscious¹⁹⁹. When influencers advocate an idea, a service, or a product, they can make a psychological conformity effect on followers through their distinctive features^{200,201}:

- **Credibility (expertise and trustworthiness)** - According to Lou and Yuan²⁰², one of the most distinctive characteristics that attract the audience is the influencer's credibility specifically the expertise and trustworthiness. The expertise has reflected the knowledge and competence of the source (influencer) in a specific area^{203,204}. While trustworthiness is represented in influencer honesty and sincerity²⁰⁵. Such characteristics help the source (influencer) to be more convincing.
- **Originality and creativity** - Originality in social media represents the ability of an influencer to provide periodically new and differentiate content that attracts the attention of the audience. The content has been perceived as innovative, sophisticated, and unusual. Social media influencers look for creating an authentic image in order to construct their own online identity. Marwick²⁰⁶ defined authenticity as "the way in which individuals distinguish themselves, not only from each other but from other types of media". The brand needs to be presented by credible and believable influencers that create authentic content²⁰⁷.
- **Trendsetter and uniqueness** - According to Maslach et al.²⁰⁸, uniqueness is the case in which the individual feels distinguished compared to others. Tian et al.²⁰⁹ admitted that individuals attempt to be radically different from others to enhance their selves and social images. The uniqueness in content represents the ability of the influencer to provide an uncirculated content specific to him.
- **Persuasion** - Persuasion has a substantive influence in discussions and conversations. According to the Psychology of Persuasion, the psychological tactic that revolves around harnessing the principles of persuasion supports in one way or another the influencer's marketing. The objective is to persuade people to make purchase decisions. Influencers' goal is to convince the audiences of their own ideas, products, or services. There are six principles of persuasion, which are consensus, consistency, scarcity, reciprocity, authority, and liking.

What kind of social media influencers do teenagers follow?

Most teens follow the influencers who can give their opinions to their needs. Or they follow the influencers who share the same interests as theirs. They want the influencers to be just like them or the ones that can make them feel more comfortable. Teens also look out for the people next door who are similar to them when they think of following an influencer on social media. Generally, kids follow the people who share data about the unboxing of digital items, games, fashion, shoes, celebrities, lifestyle, and similar areas²¹⁰.

How does social media influence affect the behavior of a child?

The concept of influencing someone is relatively straightforward. Social media influence has a positive and negative part to it. Some social media influencers actually want to spread awareness with their data, while some only want to expand their reach and brand value. Irrespective of their real purpose, children find them cool, and they even find being on the platform cool. Coming to social media influencers, children find happiness and peace in following them. The reason behind their satisfaction is that they are able to resonate with them on a personal level. It almost feels like they are a part of their friend circle, which increases their attachment. Most social media influencers come up with content that their audience can feel. And some people are good enough to offer a personal touch to it. It is a huge reason why you see social media influencers promoting brands and products. Brands want them to endorse their products because of the impact they have on people. Below are some areas where social media influencers can impact children, unintentionally or intentionally²¹¹:

- **Materialism** - social media influencers post a lot about products and otherworldly things. It is very likely to tempt teens and make them feel like having the same things for themselves. In the end, it becomes a race for the highest social status, and they end up spending the hard-earned money of their parents to get those things.
- **Lifestyle** - social media influencers often show how they are living their lives on social media. Their lifestyles are shiny and glittery. Apart from it, specific influencers honestly work to make people aware of having a healthy way of living. It can be by working out, eating clean, and doing other things to develop them into better versions of themselves.
- **Thinking and motivation** - various social media influencers talk about the importance of positive thinking and motivation. They encourage other people to create a life plan, have goals, and work for it without giving up.

To let people know that they come from humble beginnings, they also share their life experiences. It allows the followers to learn from them and move ahead in life. All in all, such influencers try to incubate good habits in their followers. For instance, some social media influencers spread awareness about social distancing and ask their followers to follow the norms.

- **Bad habits** - some influencers are all about positivity, but some aren't. Some influencers are famous for posting dangerous things and things that can incubate bad habits in teenagers. It can be driving at high speeds, smoking, drinking, and many other things. Such influencers can have a bad impact on children.

Social media influencers can bring excitement and inspiration into the lives of teens and preteens as they share their experiences online with well-designed settings, scripts, and oftentimes spontaneity. Influencers, like celebrities, can have either a negative or positive influence on their young audiences, and it is crucial that children and young people are able to think critically about what they are viewing. There are potential negative effects that influencers can have on a child's self-esteem, body image and understanding of 'real life'. Having education, trainings and discussions that improve critical thinking and digital literacy about what children experience online is one of the best ways to support them in the digital environment. Ideal conversation starters for educators include²¹²:

- Do you understand that what you are seeing online is not always true?
- Does the influencer make money if they have more views, more likes or more clicks?
- Does the influencer's lifestyle reflect real life?
- How much time do you think the influencer spent to make that video?
- What is the purpose of the video? Why are they talking about this subject?
- How do you feel when you watch the influencer (anxious, fear of missing out, inspired, etc.)?
- How can you choose influencers to watch who make you feel positive?

There are many factors that impact behavior, and these are different for every child. As educators we must know a child, their interests, strengths and vulnerabilities, and should question how big role influencers play in their life. If we look at the popular child influencers, we can get a sense of what draws many children in – the 'beautiful', the musical and sporty, the pranksters and the gamers. Find out what people a child likes, what messages they are reinforcing,

whether they make them feel positive and inspired, or whether they make them feel like they're not good enough. Be conscious of the role of influencers in marketing certain products and lifestyles²¹³.

What are some social media influencer safety tips?

Many kids have being an influencer in the top of their list of professions they want to be. All they need is a social media account. And although most social media platforms have an age limit of 13+, YouTube has been the go-to place for those under this age. It is normal for kids to look up to a popular influencer or idol of theirs. However, it is always essential to keep an eye on who they watch, the content they watch and how often. If your child watches an influencer following questions must be asked:

- Are the influencers age-appropriate? Get to know which influencers children are watching. You can simply watch a few of their videos, check out their social media and perform a google search to see who they are;
- Set ground rules to help them choose appropriate content to watch;
- Encourage them to think critically about what they see online. While they may believe everything that their favorite influencer is saying is true, it's important to encourage them to check the information out with other sources and help them differentiate between what is a fact and what is an opinion;
- Influencers tend to use their channels to highlight endorsements or sponsorship deals which means that children may be encouraged to purchase items that they are promoting from a range of brands. Whether it's toys, make-up, games or clothing, it's important to have a conversation with children who may be swayed or under pressure, to think that these recommendations are no different than watching an ad on TV. So, it's best that they do their own research before buying them.

Loss of identity in real life

In today's digital age, social networks have become an integral part of our lives. They offer unparalleled connectivity, communication and opportunities for self-expression. However, as we immerse ourselves in the virtual world of likes, comments and followers, there is growing concern about the potential effects of excessive social networking use on our real identities. Identity, by its very nature, is the unique set of characteristics, beliefs, and values that define who we are as individuals. It is shaped by our experiences, relationships and interactions with the physical world. Yet the very nature of social networking can create an

environment where the boundaries between virtual and real identity blur, resulting in a loss of the true self.

One of the ways that social media can undermine our identity is through the pressure to conform and fit into the carefully selected images presented by others. The drive for validation and acceptance can lead people to present an idealized version of themselves, chasing likes and seeking approval from virtual acquaintances. In this pursuit, authenticity often takes a back seat, resulting in a disconnect between the projected online persona and the true self, potentially leading to an identity crisis in the real world. In addition, social networks encourage a culture of comparison. Going through an endless stream of photos, professional accomplishments, and a seemingly perfect life can cause feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. Constant comparison to others can distort self-perception and cause people to doubt their own worth and achievements.

Consequently, they may seek validation from the virtual space, further deviating from their authentic self in the process. Another concern arises from the addictive nature of social networking. Spending excessive time scrolling through timelines can lead to a disconnection from real-life experiences and meaningful interactions.

The constant desire to be connected to the virtual world can prevent people from fully engaging in the present moment, impacting their ability to develop a strong sense of self and create genuine connections with others. In addition, social networks can expose users to cyberbullying, negativity, and a hostile online environment. Prolonged exposure to such toxic behavior can lead to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression, which ultimately affects an individual's self-esteem and overall identity.

To mitigate the risk of real-life identity loss due to social networking use, it is essential to develop a careful approach to our online presence. Setting limits on screen time, maintaining a positive online environment, and being aware of the potential impact of social media on our self-perception can all contribute to maintaining a healthier balance between virtual and real identities. Ultimately, while social media offers countless opportunities for connection and self-expression, it's critical to remember that our authentic identities are rooted in the real world.

By being mindful of the potential risks and taking proactive steps to nurture our true selves, we can harness the power of social networks without compromising our sense of identity in the physical world.



PROGRAM 13: INFLUENCERS TRAINING METHODS AND ACTIONS

To raise awareness of the potential loss of real-life identity due to excessive use of social networks and to encourage participants to reconnect with their authentic selves. By participating in this training program, participants can gain a deeper understanding of how social networks can affect their real-life identities and develop strategies to reconnect with their authentic selves.

REDISCOVERING YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF

Activity: reflection and group discussion

Duration: 20 min.

Objective: Encouraging mindfulness and self-reflection to help students achieve a healthier balance between their online and offline lives.

Instructions:

- Before the exercise, ask participants to spend some time reflecting on their social media habits and their perception of their online and real-life identities. They can record their thoughts and feelings about how social media may have affected their self-perception.
- Start a group discussion about the impact of social networks on identity. Encourage participants to share their thoughts and experiences on social media. Discuss common topics such as comparison, authenticity, self-esteem, and the impact of social media on real-life interactions.

IDENTIFYING DISTORTIONS

Activity: group discussion

Duration: 20 min.

Instructions:

- Divide participants into small groups and provide them with a list of potential ways social media can distort their real-life identity (e.g. seeking external validation, comparing to others, feeling pressured to conform);
- Each group should discuss and give specific examples from their own experiences or observations.

AUTHENTICITY VISION BOARD

Activity: art session

Duration: 20 min.

Instructions: Instruct each participant to create their "Authenticity Vision Board." They may use journals, printed images, or drawings to represent aspects of their true selves that may have been affected by their use of social networks or that they want to reconnect with in real life. Encourage them to include qualities, hobbies, values and interests that make them unique.

AUTHENTIC SELF-AFFIRMATIONS

Activity: art session

Duration: 20 min.

Instructions: Ask each participant to write at least five affirmations that emphasize their authentic self. These affirmations should reflect the positive qualities they want to reinforce and remind themselves of in their daily lives.

DISCONNECT CHALLENGE

Activity: training

Duration: 24 hours

Instructions:

- Challenge participants to take a 24-hour break from all social media. During this time, encourage them to participate in real-life activities, connect with their loved ones face-to-face, and be present in the moment without digital distractions.
- After the 24-hour disconnection challenge, bring participants together for a group reflection session. Ask them to share their experiences, emotions, and any observations about how the social media disconnect has affected their thoughts and actions in real life.

SETTING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Activity: discussion

Duration: 20 min.

Instructions: Discuss the importance of setting healthy boundaries when using social media. Encourage participants to identify specific practices that can help them maintain a healthy balance between online and real-life interactions, such as limiting screen time, silencing negative accounts, or unfollowing triggering content.

COMMITMENT PLEDGE

Activity: discussion

Duration: 20 min.

Instructions:

- Instruct participants to write a personal commitment. They should outline specific actions they will take to nurture their authentic self in real life and reduce the negative impact of social media on their identity.
- Conclude the exercise with a final group discussion. Encourage participants to share their engagement pledges and any insights they gained during the exercises.
- Reiterate the importance of self-awareness, self-acceptance, and genuine connections as they navigate the digital world while staying true to their authentic selves in real life.

PROGRAM 14:

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP & RESPONSIBILITY



PROGRAM 14: DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP & RESPONSIBILITY

14.1. DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

The term **digital citizen** is used with different meanings. According to the definition provided by Karen Mossberger, one of the authors of "Digital Citizenship: The Internet, Society, and Participation"²¹⁴, digital citizens are "those who use the internet regularly and effectively". In this sense, a digital citizen is a person using information technology in order to engage in society, politics, and government.

A digital citizen is someone who, through the development of a broad range of competences, is able to actively, positively and responsibly engage in both on- and offline communities, whether local, national or global. As digital technologies are disruptive in nature and constantly evolving, competence building is a lifelong process that should begin from earliest childhood at home and at school, in formal, informal and non-formal educational settings²¹⁵.

Digital citizenship refers to the responsible use of technology by anyone who uses computers, the internet, and digital devices to engage with society on any level²¹⁶. Furthermore, digital citizenship is the responsible and respectful use of technology to engage online, find reliable sources, and protect and promote human rights^{217, 218, 219}. It teaches skills to communicate, collaborate, and act positively on any online platform. It also teaches empathy, privacy protection, and security measures to prevent data breaches and identity theft.

Digital citizenship and engagement involve a wide range of activities, from creating, consuming, sharing, playing and socializing, to investigating, communicating, learning and working. Competent digital citizens are able to respond to new and everyday challenges related to learning, work, employability, leisure, inclusion and participation in society²²⁰, respecting human rights and intercultural differences.

The Council of Europe's competences for democratic culture (CDCs)²²¹ provides a simplified overview of the competences which citizens need to acquire if they are to participate effectively in a culture of democracy. These are not acquired automatically but instead need to be learned and practiced. In this, the role of education is key. The 20 competences for democratic culture, frequently referred to as the CDC "butterfly", cover four key areas: values, attitudes, skills and knowledge and critical understanding (see figure below):

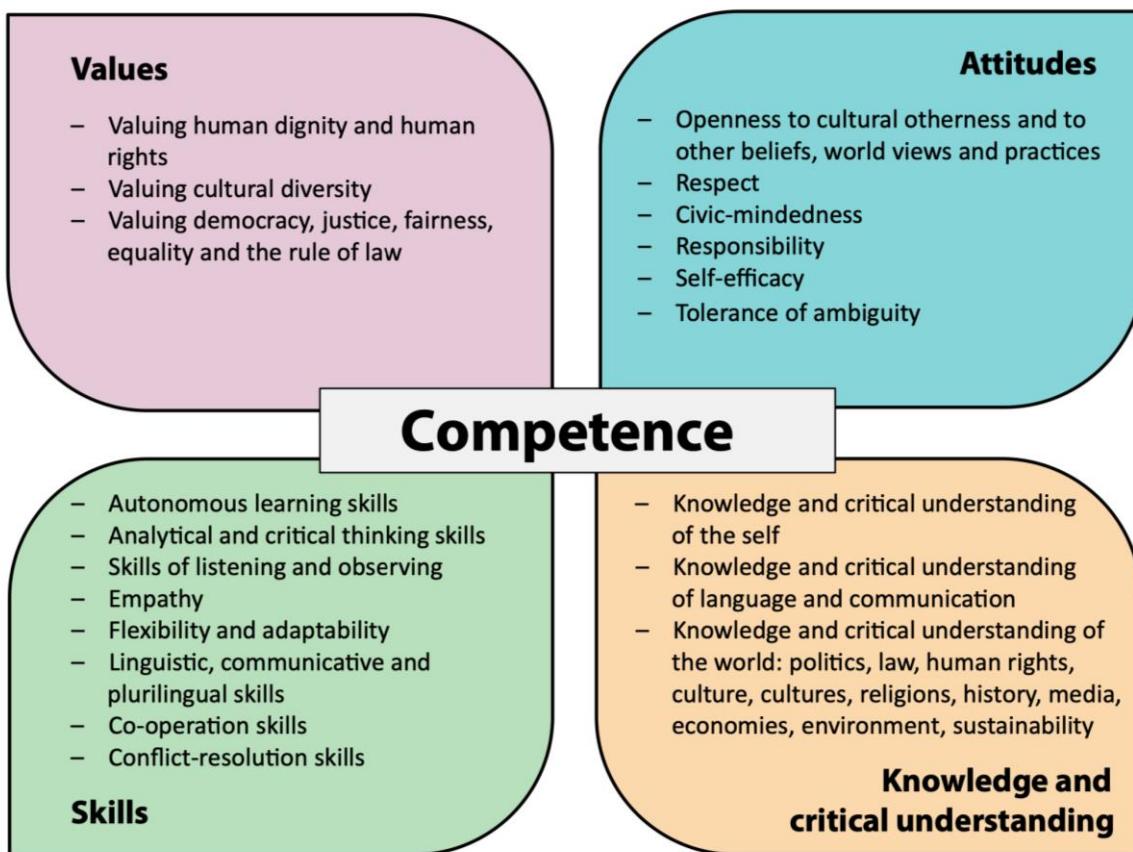


Figure 16. The 20 competences for democratic culture²²²

Digital citizenship is a term used to define the appropriate and responsible use of technology among users. Three principles were developed by Mike Ribble to teach digital users how to responsibly use technology to become a digital citizen: respect, educate, and protect²²³:

- **Respect:** the elements of etiquette, access, and law are used to respect other digital users.
- **Educate:** the elements of literacy, communication, and commerce are used to learn about the appropriate use of the digital world.
- **Protect:** the elements of rights and responsibilities, security, and health and wellness are used to remain safe in the digital and non-digital world.

Within these three core principles, there are nine elements to also be considered in regard to digital citizenship²²⁴:

1. **Digital access:** This is perhaps one of the most fundamental blocks to being a digital citizen. However, due to socioeconomic status, location,

and other disabilities, some individuals may not have digital access. Recently, schools have been becoming more connected with the internet, often offering computers, and other forms of access. This can be offered through kiosks, community centers, and open labs. This most often is associated with the digital divide and factors associated with such. Digital access is available in many remote countries via cyber cafés and small coffee shops.

2. **Digital commerce:** This is the ability for users to recognize that much of the economy is regulated online. It also deals with the understanding of the dangers and benefits of online buying, using credit cards online, and so forth. As with the advantages and legal activities- there is also dangerous activities such as illegal downloads, gambling, drug deals, pornography, plagiarism, and so forth.
3. **Digital communication:** This element deals with understanding the variety of online communication mediums such as email, instant messaging, Facebook Messenger, and so forth. There is a standard of etiquette associated with each medium.
4. **Digital literacy:** This deals with the understanding of how to use various digital devices. For example, how to properly search for something on a search engine versus an online database, or how to use various online logs. Oftentimes many educational institutions will help form an individual's digital literacy.
5. **Digital etiquette:** As discussed in the third element, digital communication, this is the expectation that various mediums require a variety of etiquette. Certain mediums demand more appropriate behavior and language than others.
6. **Digital law:** This is where enforcement occurs for illegal downloads, plagiarizing, hacking, creating viruses, sending spam, identity theft, cyberbullying, etc.
7. **Digital rights and responsibilities:** This is the set of rights that digital citizens have, such as privacy and free speech.
8. **Digital health:** Digital citizens must be aware of the physical stress placed on their bodies by internet usage. They must be aware to not become overly dependent on the internet causing problems such as eye strain, headaches, and stress.
9. **Digital security:** This simply means that citizens must take measures to be safe by practicing using secure passwords, virus protection, backing up data, and so forth.

14.2. DIGITAL SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Socially responsible behavior on social networks refers to the ethical and responsible behavior of individuals while engaging in online interactions, sharing content and participating in a community. This includes adhering to certain principles and behaviors that promote positive engagement, respect for others, and the well-being of the online community. Socially responsible behavior on social networks is:

- **Respecting Privacy:** Respecting the privacy and consent of others by refraining from sharing personal information or images without explicit permission.
- **Responsible Content Sharing:** Being mindful of the content shared and considering the potential impact it may have on others.
- **Authenticity and Honesty:** Maintaining authenticity and honesty in online interactions, representing yourself accurately, and avoiding creating or distributing false profiles or misleading information.
- **Kindness and Empathy:** Promoting a culture of kindness, empathy and inclusion in online interactions.
- **Responsible Information Sharing:** Fact-check information before sharing, ensure accuracy, and avoid spreading false or misleading content. Encouraging reliable sources and critical thinking.
- **Balancing online and offline life:** Maintaining a healthy balance between virtual and offline activities. Avoiding excessive screen time and prioritizing personal well-being, productivity, and real-world relationships.
- **Digital Citizenship:** Understanding the rights, responsibilities and ethical implications of participating in the online community. Knowledge of legal and copyright issues, respect for intellectual property, and compliance with terms of service on social media platforms.
- **Positive Engagement and Impact:** Using social media as tools for positive change, raising awareness of social issues, supporting charitable causes and engaging in meaningful discussions. Contributing to improving the online community and using social networks for social good.
- **Critical Thinking and Media Literacy:** Developing critical thinking skills to assess the credibility and reliability of information shared on social

networks. Awareness of bias, propaganda and misinformation and actively seeking accurate information with good sources.

- **Responsible Digital Footprint:** Consideration of the long-lasting nature of online content and the potential impact it can have on personal and professional lives. Taking responsibility for your digital footprint by avoiding online behavior that could be detrimental in the future.
- **Consent and permission:** seeking consent before tagging or mentioning others in publications, especially if it involves sensitive or personal information. Respecting the boundaries and privacy preferences of others regarding online interactions and content sharing.
- **Cybersecurity Awareness:** Prioritize online security and privacy by using strong and unique passwords, enabling two-factor authentication, being cautious of phishing attempts, and staying up-to-date on the latest security practices to protect personal information and prevent hacking or identity theft.
- **Online Etiquette and Courtesy:** Practice good online etiquette by being courteous, polite and respectful in interactions. Avoiding aggressive or abusive language, personal attacks, or engaging in online disputes that can escalate tension and negativity.
- **Engaging in Constructive Dialogue:** Actively participate in discussions and debates with an open mind, considering different points of view and maintaining a respectful tone. Avoiding online echo chambers and seeking different perspectives to promote healthy and productive conversations.
- **Engaging the online community:** contributing positively to online communities by sharing valuable information, offering support and encouraging collaboration. Being an active and responsible community member, reporting abuse and helping to create a safe and inclusive environment for all users.
- **Digital wellbeing:** prioritizing mental health and wellbeing in the digital space by setting boundaries, taking regular breaks from social media and being aware of the impact of excessive screen time on overall wellbeing. Balancing online activities with offline self-care, hobbies and real-world connections.
- **Continuous learning and adaptation:** Keeping up with the evolving nature of social media platforms, policies and societal norms. Being open to

learning, unlearning and adapting your behavior to align with responsible and ethical practices in the digital sphere.

By adopting socially responsible behavior on social networks, people can foster a healthier and more positive online environment, build trust and respect in communities and contribute to a more inclusive and impactful digital world. By embracing these additional aspects of socially responsible behavior, individuals can contribute to a more positive, inclusive and trustworthy social media environment. It is through collective effort that we can shape a digital landscape that reflects the values of respect, empathy, integrity and social impact.

Why is socially responsible behavior on social networks crucial?

Young users often represent a significant portion of the user base on many social networking platforms. Consequently, their behavior has a profound impact on the overall culture and environment of these platforms. By acting responsibly, they contribute to a healthier, more respectful and more constructive digital environment. The Internet, especially social media, has a profound impact on the development of young people. It affects their social skills, their views on various topics and their overall well-being. When young users behave responsibly online, they can protect themselves from potential harm, such as cyberbullying, online harassment or exposure to inappropriate content.

Socially responsible behavior includes understanding and respecting digital privacy. For young consumers this is particularly important as they may not fully understand the potential long-term consequences of sharing personal information online.

Young consumers can play a crucial role in combating the spread of misinformation online. By learning how to critically evaluate online content and understanding the importance of sharing verified information, they can contribute to a more informed and insightful online community.

Socially responsible behavior by young users on social networks is vital. It contributes to a safer and more respectful digital environment, protects young users from potential harm, helps protect their privacy, and fosters an informed and insightful online community. It is important that educators, parents and society at large support and guide young people to become responsible digital citizens.



PROGRAM 14: DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP & RESPONSIBILITY TRAINING METHODS AND ACTIONS

Social responsibility training and active social citizenship are concepts essential to fostering positive engagement and responsible behavior in online communities. The purpose of this training program is to help participants to acquire the skills, the confidence and the ability to be active and to be able to distinguish truth from discriminatory behavior online.

WHEN DO WE SHARE INFORMATION?

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 60 min.

Instructions: The following questions must be discussed “Do we share information...:

- ... if we are a first-person witness to an accident?”
- ... if we have checked the news from several sources and it is credible and does not violate basic human rights?”
- ... if the information will help other users either to clarify the causes of the incident or to deal with it?”
- ... if the information is of public importance?”

WHAT INFORMATION DO WE SHARE?

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 60 min.

Instructions: The following questions must be discussed:

- We do not publish other people's personal information unless we have the express permission to do so;
- We do not publish material with sensitive information;
- We do not post pictures of minors;
- We don't use words like "shock", "horror", they can traumatize other users in the social network and increase their anxiety.

THE SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

Activity: brainstorming

Duration: 30 min.

Instructions: In this activity, participants will write on a flip chart everything they know about successful people on social media and what they do – Influencers, bloggers, vloggers, podcasters, reporters, and more. The aim is to highlight the socially responsible behavior of celebrities towards their followers.

RESEARCH ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Activity: discussion

Duration: 30 min.

Instructions: With your class, look at a social media platform and find a topic that is trending. Invite students to discuss who has access to this information and who does not. Could this have a negative or positive effect?

ANALOGUE VERSUS DIGITAL:

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 30 min.

Instructions: Divide the class into two groups and ask both groups to research the same topic. One group will use as their information sources only books in the school library, the other group will use only the internet and digital sources. Compare the results and the lessons learned from the exercise. How much of a disadvantage is it for students who do not have access to the internet to access resources? What types of skills are necessary for finding information both online and offline? Is there a difference in the quality of information found in books compared with the internet?

BUILDING DIGITAL EMPATHY

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 30 min.

Objective: Develop participants' empathy skills and ability to demonstrate empathy in online interactions.

Instructions: Engage participants in an empathy building activity. Encourage open and non-judgmental discussion to foster empathy. Introduce digital

empathy - its concept and importance in the online communication. Discuss the challenges of understanding emotions online, interpreting tone, and the importance of being sensitive to the feelings of others.

ONLINE CONFLICT IN SOCIAL NETWORKS CONCEPT

Activity: Discussion

Duration: 30 min.

Introduction: Online conflict in social networks is a complex and pervasive problem with far-reaching implications for individuals and communities. Understanding the causes and consequences of such conflicts is essential to developing effective strategies to mitigate their occurrence. By promoting digital literacy, encouraging civil discourse and facilitating conflict resolution, social networking platforms can play a major role in creating a healthier online environment where conflicts are managed constructively, fostering mutual understanding and promoting a sense of community.

Instruction: Provide participants with case studies involving online conflicts or misunderstandings. In small groups, ask participants to discuss and analyze the situations, identifying empathetic responses and suggesting ways to resolve conflicts through empathy.

ONLINE CONFLICT - CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES, SOLUTIONS

Activity: case study

Duration: 60 min.

Abstract: This case study aims to analyze and understand the phenomenon of online social networking conflicts by focusing on the causes, consequences, and potential solutions. The study explores a real-life scenario in which an online conflict erupts on a popular social networking platform, examining the various factors that contributed to the escalation and offering insights into conflict resolution strategies.

Case Scenario: In this case study, we will examine a fictional scenario involving a conflict that occurred on a social network called "FriendNet." The conflict involves two active users, Lisa and Michael, who have different views on political issues. The conflict begins with a seemingly innocuous discussion, but quickly turns into a heated exchange of rants and insults, drawing in other users and creating a hostile online environment.

Reasons for the conflict:

- **Differing viewpoints:** Lisa and Michael have strongly opposed views on the politically sensitive topic, each feeling passionate about their point of view. Their inability to understand and respect alternative perspectives creates a basis for conflict.
- **Anonymity and disinhibition:** Online environments often provide users with a sense of anonymity, leading them to express their thoughts and emotions more freely. This lack of face-to-face interaction can contribute to the escalation of conflict, as people may be more likely to make inflammatory or offensive statements without immediate consequences.
- **Echo chambers and polarization:** Social networks tend to encourage echo chambers where users are primarily exposed to content and posts that are consistent with their own. This reinforcement of existing beliefs can lead to increased polarization, making it challenging for people to engage in constructive dialogue or find common ground.

Consequences of conflict:

- **Personal well-being:** Lisa and Michael, as well as other users involved in the conflict, experienced increased stress, anxiety and emotional distress. Online conflicts can have a significant psychological impact, affecting people's psychological well-being.
- **Community division:** conflict has a ripple effect, dividing the online community into factions, with users taking sides and engaging in further conflict. Such divisions can split communities and inhibit meaningful discourse, reducing the potential for finding solutions or shared understanding.
- **Reputation and social capital:** both Lisa and Michael suffered damage to their personal reputations as a result of their involvement in the conflict. Negative perceptions can affect their professional opportunities, personal relationships, and future interactions within the online community.

Potential solutions:

- **Promoting digital literacy:** Educating users about responsible online behavior, critical thinking and effective communication strategies can enable people to deal more constructively with online conflict.
- **Promoting civil discourse:** Platforms can implement guidelines and moderation strategies that promote respectful and inclusive conversations

that discourage hate speech, personal attacks and misinformation. This includes fostering a culture of empathy and understanding.

- **Promoting mediation and conflict resolution:** Introducing formal mediation processes or providing access to trained mediators can help mitigate conflict and promote peaceful solutions.

V. CONCLUSION

The successful implementation of the handbook (and the methodology, that is accompanying it) will lead to one major positive outcome – development of digital Intelligence of the students, undergoing the training programs.

Digital Intelligence is a multifaceted term that is described as “the set of social, emotional and cognitive abilities that enable individuals to face the challenges and adapt to the demands of digital life”²²⁵.

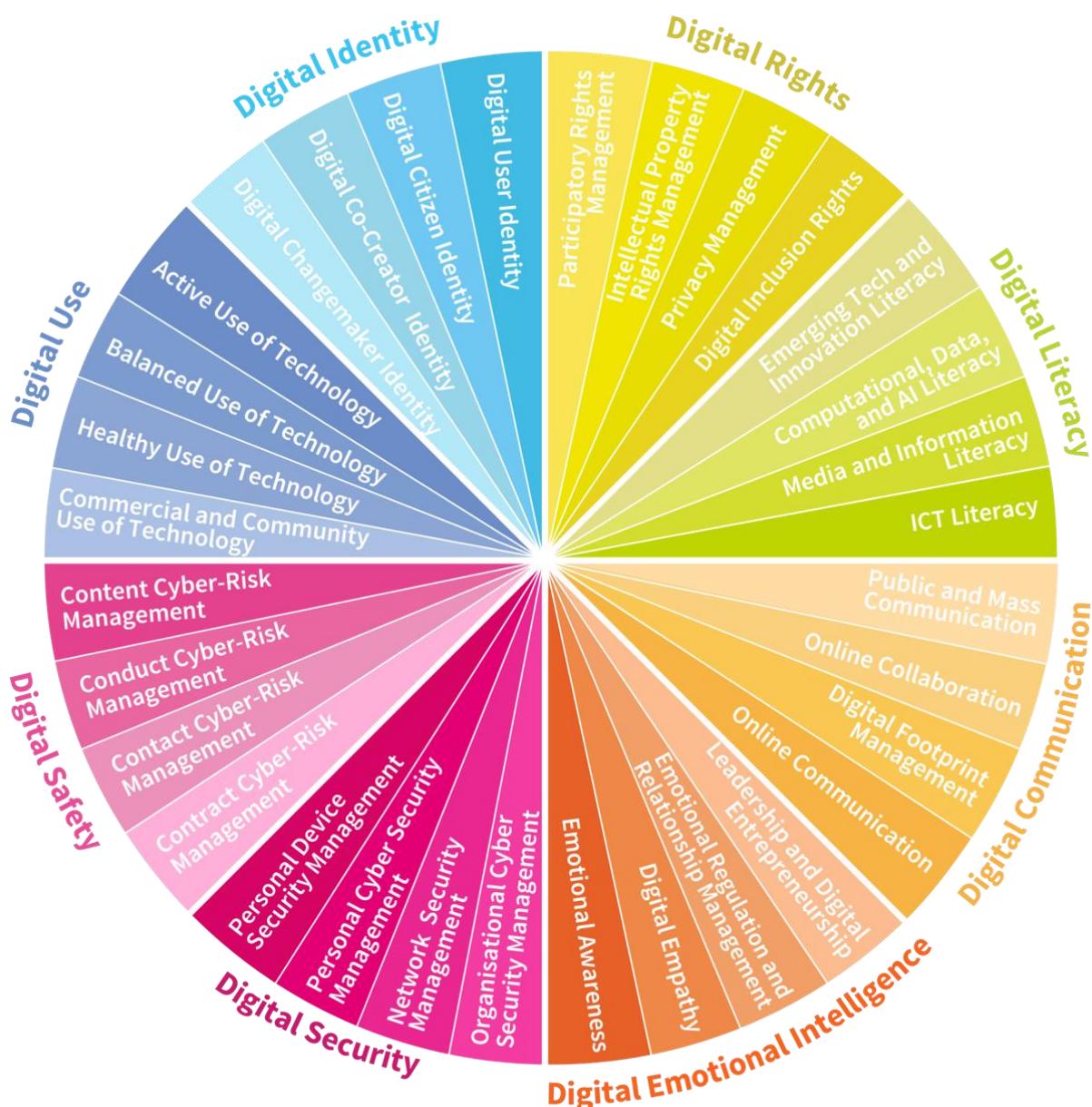


Figure 17. Digital intelligence²²⁶

Digital intelligence is an enabler of personal and community development. As such, digital intelligence has been recognized as a duty of stakeholders, both nationally and internationally to advance individual and community-level prosperity (socially, politically, economically). The need to ensure that everyone has the possibility to develop the skills, knowledge, behaviors and confidence necessary to realize the potential of digital technologies has become more pressing²²⁷.

Beyond IQ (cognitive intelligence) and EQ (emotional intelligence), DQ (digital Intelligence) represents **32 digital competencies** needed to thrive in the digital age²²⁸:

	Digital Identity	Digital Use	Digital Safety	Digital Security	Digital Emotional Intelligence	Digital Communication	Digital Literacy	Digital Rights
Digital Connectivity	Digital User Identity	Active Use of Technology	Content Cyber-Risk Management	Personal Device Security Management	Emotional Awareness	Online Communication	ICT Literacy	Digital Inclusion Rights
Digital Citizenship	Digital Citizen Identity	Balanced Use of Technology	Conduct Cyber-Risk Management	Personal Cyber Security Management	Digital Empathy	Digital Footprint Management	Media and Information Literacy	Privacy Management
Digital Creativity	Digital Co-Creator Identity	Healthy Use of Technology	Contact Cyber-Risk Management	Network Security Management	Emotional Regulation and Relationship Management	Online Collaboration	Computational, Data, and AI Literacy	Intellectual Property Rights Management
Digital Competitiveness	Digital Changemaker Identity	Commercial and Community Use of Technology	Contract Cyber-Risk Management	Organizational Cyber Security Management	Leadership and Digital Entrepreneurship	Public and Mass Communication	Emerging Tech and Innovation Literacy	Participatory Rights Management

Figure 18. Digital Intelligence competencies²²⁹

These abilities can broadly be broken down into eight interconnected areas²³⁰:

- **Digital identity:** The ability to create and manage one's online identity and reputation. This includes an awareness of one's online persona and management of the short-term and long-term impact of one's online presence;
- **Digital use:** The ability to use digital devices and media, including the mastery of control in order to achieve a healthy balance between life online and offline;
- **Digital safety:** The ability to manage risks online (e.g. cyberbullying, grooming, radicalization) as well as problematic content (e.g. violence and obscenity), and to avoid and limit these risks;
- **Digital security:** The ability to detect cyber threats (e.g. hacking, scams, malware), to understand best practices and to use suitable security tools for data protection;
- **Digital emotional intelligence:** The ability to be empathetic and build good relationships with others online;
- **Digital communication:** The ability to communicate and collaborate with others using digital technologies and media;
- **Digital literacy:** The ability to find, evaluate, utilize, share and create content as well as competency in computational thinking;
- **Digital rights:** The ability to understand and uphold personal and legal rights, including the rights to privacy, intellectual property, freedom of speech and protection from hate speech.

These eight areas can each be developed at four levels: connectivity, citizenship, creativity and competitiveness²³¹:

- **Connectivity** focuses on digital inclusion to ensure that individuals are connected to digital technology.
- **Citizenship** focuses on basic levels of skills needed to use technologies in responsible, safe, and ethical ways.
- **Creativity** allows problem-solving through the creation of new knowledge, technologies, and content.
- **Competitiveness** focuses on innovations to change communities and the economy for broad benefit.

In 2021 IEEE Standards Association board approved IEEE 3527.1™ Standard for Digital Intelligence - first global standard related to digital literacy, digital skills, and digital readiness²³²:



Figure 19. Global Standard for Digital Intelligence²³³

Digital literacy and digital skills have become a mandatory part of education and training for all people. It is critical for nations to rapidly develop and incorporate high-quality digital literacy and digital skills education and training programs across all age groups. The scope of these skills must be comprehensive enough to enable people to maximize the benefits of digital technology with new job opportunities available in the digital economy, while minimizing the risks and helping to overcome the challenges of the digital world. However, to date, there have not been consensus definitions of digital literacy or digital skills, which has led to pronounced educational and training gaps in digital skills across regions, sectors, and genders²³⁴.

One of the most affected groups of people is children, who are heavily influenced by the digital skills gap with schools closing, fewer services available, and a tremendous increase in unregulated online access due to COVID-19. Beforehand, children were already suffering from insufficient support on digital literacy and digital skills, as evidenced by the **2020 Child Online Safety Index (COSI)** that reported that 60% of 8- to 12-year-olds across 30 countries were exposed to at least one cyber-risk²³⁵:

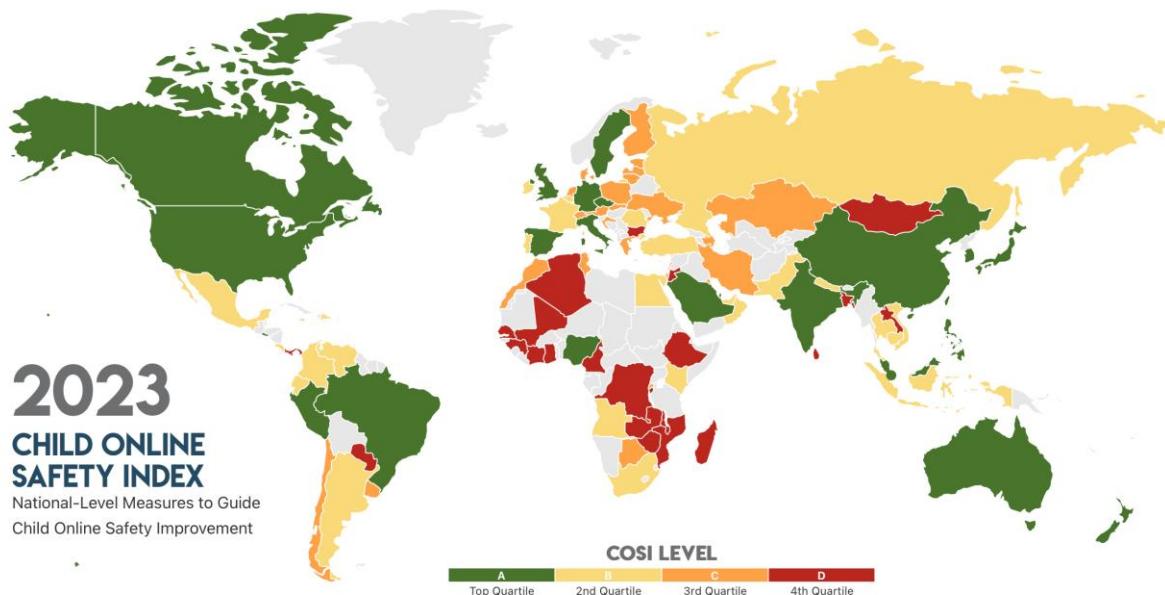


Figure 20. Child online safety index 2023²³⁶

The risks children face online are varied and require joined multifaceted actions by different stakeholders at different levels:

COSI NATIONAL MONITORING SYSTEM

Helps Nations Make Better
Strategic Resource Allocations
Based On the Global Benchmark

A	Top Quartile
B	2nd Quartile
C	3rd Quartile
D	4th Quartile

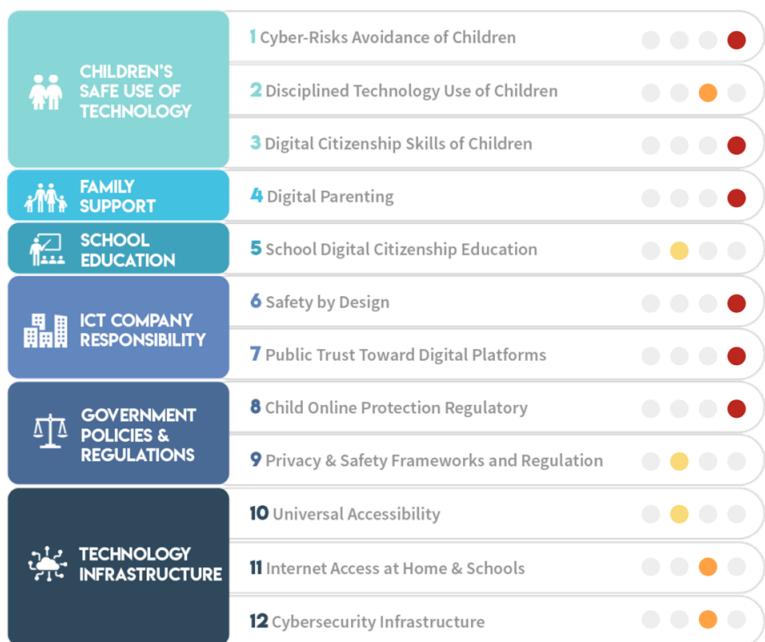


Figure 21. Child Online Safety Index national monitoring system²³⁷

The **Child Online Safety Index** score is a composite rating that combines the scores of six key stakeholders, evaluating their efforts to enhance child online safety within the country²³⁸:

1. Children's Safe Use of Technology (Children),
2. Family Support (Families),
3. School Digital Citizenship Education (Schools),
4. ICT Company Responsibility (ICT Companies),
5. Government Policies and Regulation (Government Policies),
6. Technology Infrastructure (Technology Infrastructure).

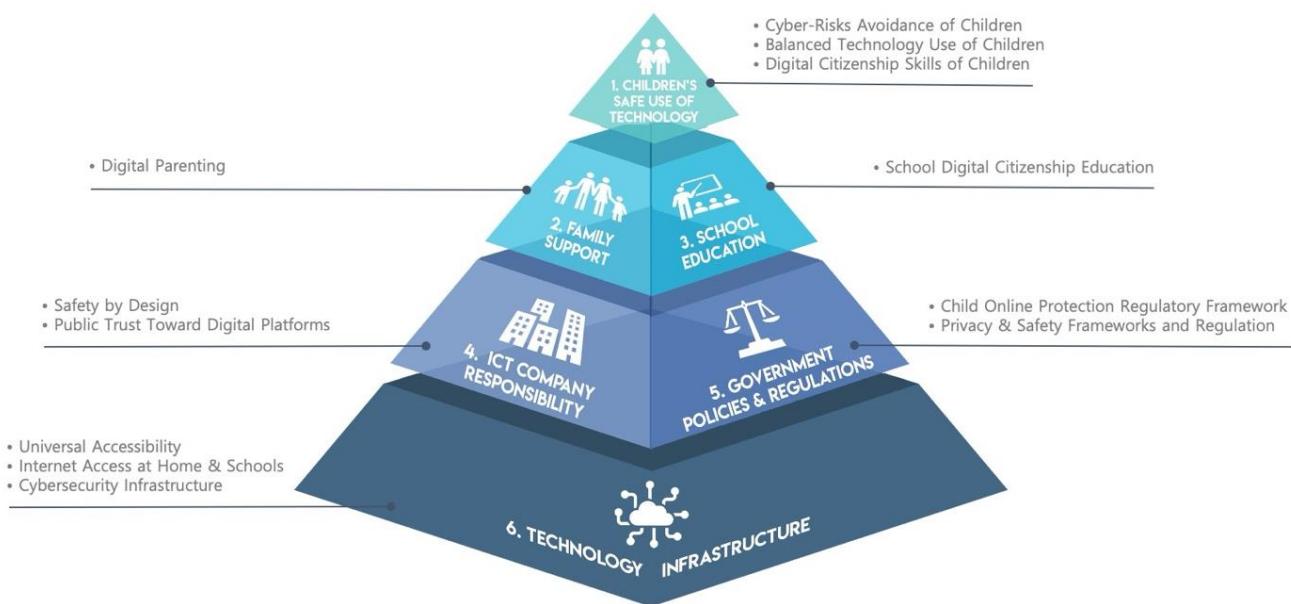


Figure 22. Improvement strategies across stakeholders of COSI²³⁹

In today's fast-paced and rapidly evolving world, it has become essential for students to have a curriculum that prepares them for the future. While soft skills such as communication, collaboration, and critical thinking are crucial, they are no longer sufficient. The increasing demand for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) skills in the workforce means that students need to develop a strong foundation in these areas to be future-ready. Students who have a solid understanding of STEM subjects are better equipped to solve complex problems, think critically, and innovate.

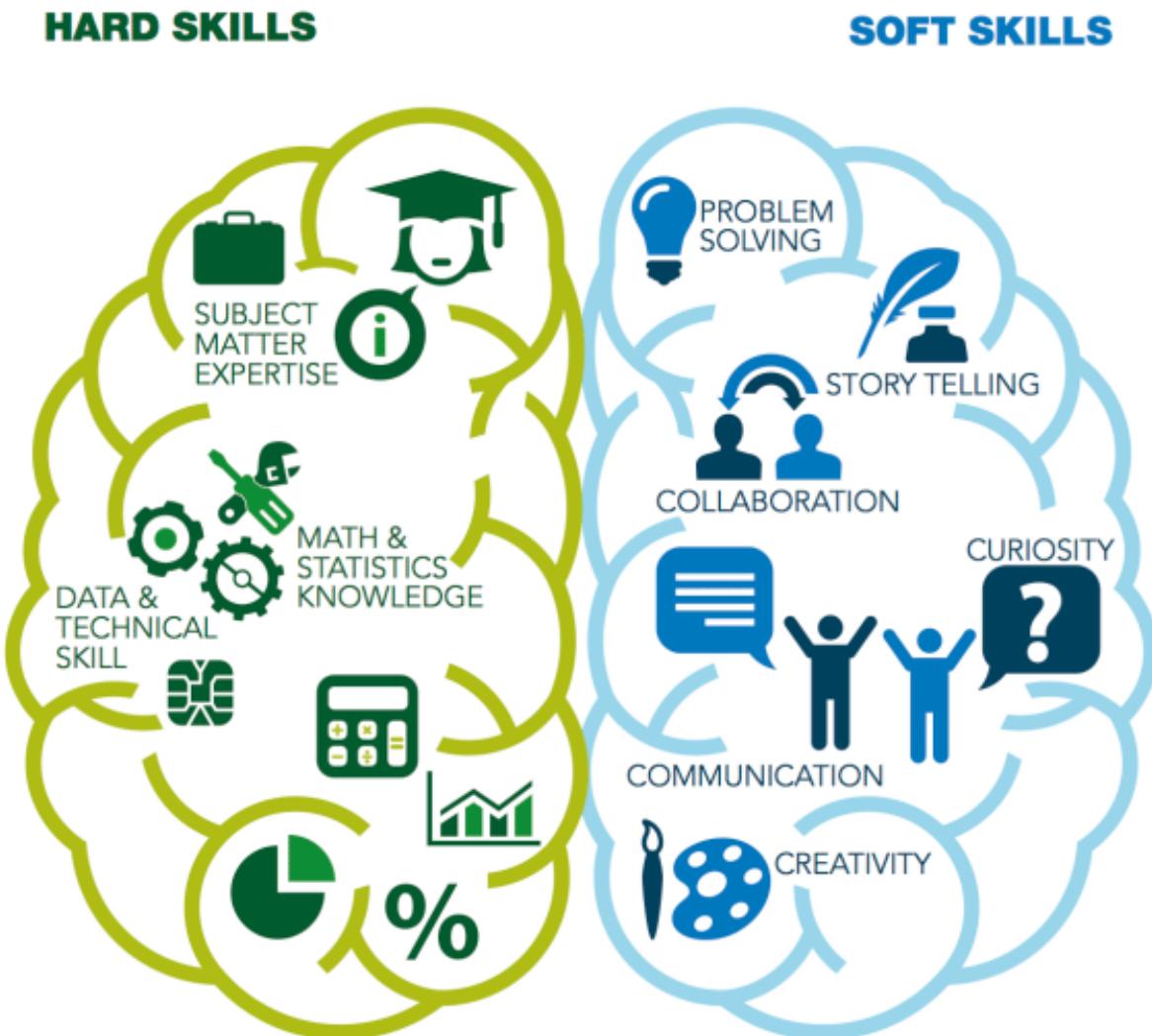


Figure 23. Soft skills and STEM skills²⁴⁰

So, how can we build a future-ready curriculum that incorporates both soft skills and STEM skills? Here are some ways to make it happen²⁴¹:

- 1. Start early:** Introducing STEM concepts to students at an early age is crucial. This could be done through age-appropriate games, experiments, and activities that help them develop an interest in these subjects. For example, simple experiments like building a bridge with straws or a tower with marshmallows and toothpicks can help children understand engineering concepts.

2. **Focus on hands-on learning:** Students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process. Hands-on activities like experiments, projects, and simulations can help students apply STEM concepts in real-world situations. These activities also help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
3. **Use technology:** Technology is an integral part of our lives, and it's essential to prepare students to use it effectively. Incorporating technology in the curriculum can help students develop digital literacy and coding skills. For example, students can learn coding through games, coding challenges, and other interactive activities.
4. **Promote collaboration:** Collaboration is a critical skill in the workforce, and it's essential to develop this skill in students. Group projects and activities can help students learn how to work together, communicate effectively, and solve problems as a team.
5. **Encourage creativity:** STEM subjects can be challenging, and it's essential to encourage creativity to keep students engaged. Creative projects like designing a robot or building a model of a sustainable city can help students think outside the box and develop innovative solutions to complex problems.
6. **Emphasize real-world applications:** Students are more likely to be engaged in learning when they understand how it applies to the real world. Incorporating real-world applications of STEM subjects in the curriculum can help students see the relevance of what they are learning.
7. **Foster a growth mindset:** STEM subjects can be challenging, and it's essential to foster a growth mindset in students. Encourage students to embrace challenges, learn from their mistakes, and persist even when faced with obstacles. This mindset will help them develop resilience and grit, which are crucial for success in the workforce.

New digital media and platforms are launched every year, and their hold on our attention as users is constantly on the rise, with younger and younger children gaining access without undergoing important preparation. But unlike general intelligence, which is commonly viewed as a genetically determined intelligence, digital intelligence is something that needs to be built. It is a fundamental precursor to 21st century skill development for the future workforce because, like a language, it is most effectively absorbed at a young age. The world needs digital intelligence. As the Fourth Industrial Revolution progresses and our lives become increasingly connected, the health and prosperity of societies the world over will depend on it.²⁴²

It is considered that there are 12 main future-readiness skills for individuals to obtain in order to achieve their life well-being as well as their career development. This is the base of various reports and publications, developed by international organizations (e.g. OECD²⁴³, the World Economic Forum²⁴⁴), private sector (e.g. Accenture²⁴⁵, McKinsey²⁴⁶), and the civic sector (e.g. The city of London²⁴⁷, Ashoka²⁴⁸):

Table 6. Future-Readiness Skills²⁴⁹

FUTURE-READINESS SKILLS
1. Analytical Thinking (and innovation)
2. Critical Thinking
3. Organizational Skills (Planning, time management, deadlines, prioritization, multi-tasking)
4. Technological Skills (Technology use, monitoring, and control)
5. Problem Solving
6. Creativity
7. Initiative
8. Communication (Oral Communication/ presentation skills)
9. Adaptability (Flexibility)
10. Resilience
11. Social and Emotional skills (Emotional Intelligence)
12. Leadership (and social influence)

In today's rapidly changing world, it's crucial for students to have a future-ready education that prepares them for the demands of the workforce. This means going beyond traditional academic subjects.

On average, education systems around the world are ill equipped to set standards and guidelines around online life for young people, and to integrate DQ capacity-building within their schools. As a result, children and parents are generally on their own, with little concrete support²⁵⁰.

This handbook is aimed at educating students, youth workers and educators and consists of knowledge, attitudes, values and skills that will make them more competitive in the future²⁵¹. And the future is almost here. Above all, the acquisition of digital intelligence abilities should be rooted in desirable human values such as respect, empathy and prudence. These values facilitate the wise and responsible use of technology – an attribute which will mark the future leaders of tomorrow. Indeed, cultivating digital intelligence grounded in human values is essential for our kids to become masters of technology instead of being mastered by it²⁵².

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