WHO AM I ONLINE? | *LIKE*

Overview

> *This curriculum is part of a series of interactive activities associated with the documentary film, LIKE. In line with the mission of David Legacy's Foundation, the curriculum aims to support healthy habits and interactions among young people online. Partaking in these structured conversations about the complexities of digital life opens up lines of communication among parents, caregivers, and their children, as well as within classrooms. Other activities in the series are designed to combat the pressures involved in having online identities and the mental health impact of cyberbullying on young people.*

In *LIKE,* we see major differences between parents and their children in terms of the ways that they present themselves online: A pair of daughters, for example, teach their father how to take a perfectly angled selfie.

The film observes the "masks" that social media app users wear when they are online, noting that there is little relationship between the images presented on these apps and reality. Understanding that "online" does not always equate with reality is one technique to help young people

Disclaimer

The activities in this package are provided to support family conversations around the topics shared in the *LIKE* screening and can be used at your discretion.

If at any time there are concerns about the well-being of a participant, please feel free to discontinue the activity.

Aims

In this activity, participants describe their online identities. Later, they will identify one "influencer" who they follow online and break down the online identities that these people create.

Audience

This series of activities is directed at 11-18-years-old participants or those young people who are actively using screens and social media.

Materials

- ★ Handout, "Who Am I Online?" (see below)
- ★ Markers or colored pencils (or, access to an app like Bitmoji)

Getting Started

Tell participants that they will be building a toolbox for analyzing an online self, or the ways that people present themselves online, often through savvy use of photo editing and selective posting.

Activities

PART 1

- ★ Pass out copies of the "How Do We Create Online Identities?" handout.

- ★ Distribute markers and/or colored pencils. If participants have access to a smartphone and a printer, tell them they can use an avatar-creator like Bitmoji for this part of the exercise.

- ★ On the handout, direct the participants to draw or create two versions of themselves:
    - ○ A version that feels most aligned with who they are when no one else is paying attention, and they feel most at ease and happy.
    - ○ A version of their "online" self, the one that they post online for everyone to see.

○ Encourage them to get detailed and depict themselves in a specific environment, wearing certain clothing, and with a clear facial expression.

★ Once everyone has had enough time for drawing and/or creating their avatars, ask the participants to get into groups of three. Each member of the group should share their two versions of themselves and describe their choices.

★ Gather the participants together to debrief their creations: *What were the differences between the two selves? Were there any overlaps? What did you like about seeing your group members' depictions of themselves?*

PART 2
★ Redirect the group back to their handouts. Now, they will do the second part of the activity: They will select an "influencer"--or a person with a large social media following, on say, YouTube, TikTok, or Instagram, that has the power to shape the decisions of others. They will spend time looking at the influencer's platform and take notes on what they are observing.

★ Give participants time to select an influencer, observe their online identity, and write their responses on the handout.

★ Direct the participants back into their groups of three. Now, they should share their findings from their influencer study. As each person shares, they can take notes on their handout. When they finish, they should have notes on three different online identities.

Wrapping Up

Bring participants back together as a group. Ask them what some of their responses are to the influencers' profiles: *What seems like a "construction"? Is there anything that is "authentic"? How does looking at these profiles make you feel?*

Extensions

Listen to the *TED Radio Hour Talk*[1], "Thomas Curran: How Can We Teach Kids To Accept Imperfection?" Social psychologist Thomas Curran describes his research on how perfectionism is dangerous for young people's mental health.

Have a conversation about how social media promotes being "perfect"? What pressure does it add to young people's lives?
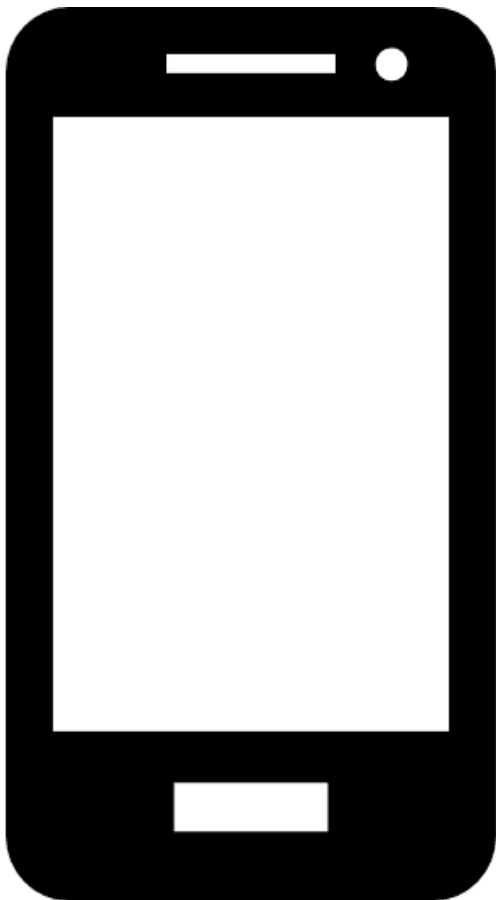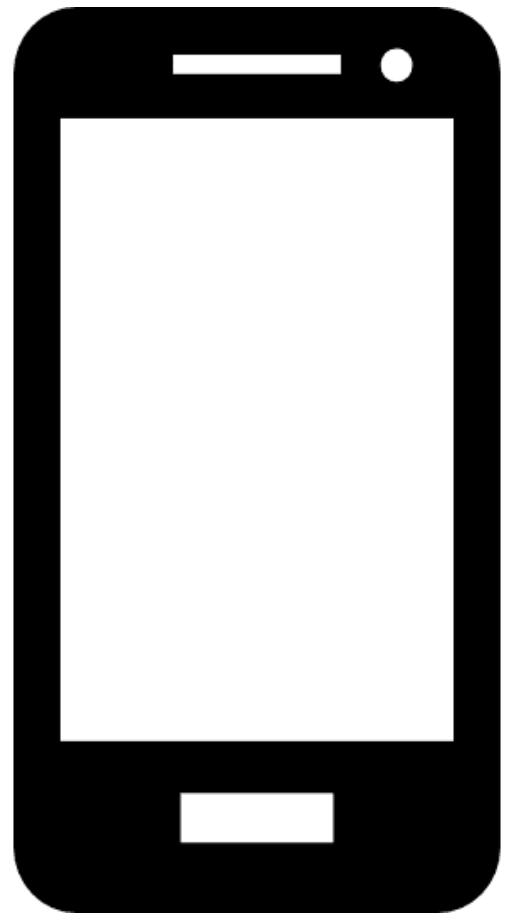
Appendix

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[1] Curran, Thomas. "How Can We Teach Kids To Accept Imperfection?" TED Radio Hour Talk, NPR, September 19, 2019.
https://www.npr.org/2019/09/20/762097695/thomas-curran-how-can-we-teach-kids-to-accept-imperfection

Part 1: How Do YOU Create an Online Self

MY "TRUE" SELF

MY "ONLINE" SELF

Part 2: How Do OTHERS Create an Online Self?

Name of Influencer	What You Learn About Their Online Presentation	Your Response