



DOES SOCIAL MEDIA MAKE US BEHAVE BADLY?

FILM: *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 between parents, caregivers, and their children. Other activities in the series are designed to combat the pressures involved in having online identities and the deleterious mental health impact of cyberbullying on young people.

Like covers one of the big purposes of social media: It's a way that individuals broadcast their message to an audience. The documentary also shows how such popular use of online communication has led to unhealthy, hostile interactions online. As a follow-up of these ideas, viewers of the film will watch a short video on the "disinhibition effect" of being online, or how online environments encourage people to act differently than they would offline.

Aims

Participants will identify and discuss some of their key reactions to a short film about online behavior.

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

- ★ Bess, Myles. "Is the Internet Making You Meaner?" *Above the Noise and Cut Through the Hype*, KQED, August 5, 2019. <https://www.kqed.org/education/532334/is-the-internet-making-you-meaner>
- ★ Video response graphic organizer (see below)
- ★ Journals for writing

Getting Started

Tell participants that they will view a short video, "Is the Internet Making You Meaner?" The video covers the "disinhibition effect"¹ or how online formats lower people's inhibitions, or their comfort-levels, so they act in ways that wouldn't normally face-to-face.

Activities

- ★ Ask participants to warm-up their thinking before starting the film clip. For a few minutes, they should write a response in a journal to the following prompt:

Do you think the internet makes us "meaner"? Explain your opinion, drawing either from examples in your own life or those you have heard about in the news or from friends.

- ★ Once participants have had 5-8 minutes to write, instruct them to turn to someone and share out their response. Tell them that they should all be ready to share something that emerged from their conversation.

¹ Suler, John. "The Online Disinhibition Effect." *Cyberpsychology & Behavior* 7, no. 3 (2004): 321-326.



- ★ Gather the participants together. Ask each to share out one tidbit from their paired conversation, either a shared experience, observation, or example.
- ★ Summarize the responses from participants. Then, pass out copies of the graphic organizer to structure their notes on the film clip.
- ★ Instruct all participants to use the organizer to jot down important ideas, questions, and connections to their life. They should leave the final response box blank until after the clip is over.
- ★ Play the video, “Is the Internet Making You Meaner?” from KQED’s series, *Above the Noise and Cut Through the Hype*.
- ★ When the video finishes, ask the participants to get back with their partner. Give them 10 minutes to collaboratively review their notes, make additions, and offer a final reflection in the final box on the graphic organizer.

Wrapping Up

Re-group all of the participants. Together, debrief the main ideas of the video:

- What is the “disinhibition effect”?
- What are some of the key features of the effect?
- What are some of the upsides, if any, of disinhibition?
- How do you think disinhibition contributes to online abuses like cyberbullying?

Finally, ask each participant to share out either one thing that they related to in the film or something that they responded to strongly.



Extensions

In the video, Myles Bess discusses the problems of anonymity, lag time, and lack of verbal cues as being some of the contributing factors to online meanness and abuse. Can you think of any examples of apps, websites, campaigns, or even day-to-day actions that are working to fight online abuse? Find an example of an app, website, or person.

Appendix



“Is the Internet Making Us Meaner?” Response Organizer

Watch

Jot down the most important ideas you see in the video.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to write down the most important ideas from the video.

Questions

What questions do you have as you watch?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to write down questions they have while watching the video.

Relate

Do any of the ideas in the video relate to your personal experience?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to write down how ideas from the video relate to their personal experiences.

Final Response

What are your final reflections on the video?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to write down their final reflections on the video.