INTERNET SAFETY/SOCIAL NETWORKING

Time Required: 30-45 minutes

Principles:

- Students will understand safety and survival skills and apply coping strategies.

Objectives (Students will…):

- Learn safety perimeters for using the Internet including social networking sites.

GOAL: Students will discuss ways to be when safe when using the internet including social networking sites.

Activity Statements:

Students will explore the importance of responsible use of electronic media as a method of socialization including the Internet – chat rooms, blogs, social websites and email. They will discuss the pros and cons of Internet use and the dangers that exist.

Materials:

Handout 1 – Pros and Cons of the Internet

Handout 2 – Dangers of the Internet

Handout 3 – Safety Resources

Procedures:

Ask the students the following questions:

> Do you have a posting on MySpace or Face Book?
> Do you IM your friends and family?
> Do you chat with strangers?
> How much time do you spend on the Internet outside school hours?

Give students Handout 1 and review the pros and cons of using the Internet as a communication tool. Divide students into small groups and give them Handout 2. Each group should discuss the Internet dangers and have them record examples of these dangerous activities and the consequences. The examples may be either from personal experiences or those they are aware of from the news. Have students share their responses to the Internet dangers.

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Discussion:

What can you do to protect yourself from the dangers of the Internet?

Have you or someone you know been harassed on the internet.

What did you do?

What should you do if you feel that you are being exploited or harassed?

Additional Resources:

http://kidshealth.org/teen/safety/safebasics/internet_safety.html - Safe Surfing Tips for Teens

http://www.usatoday.com/tech/news/2007-01-08-teen-networks_x.htm - USA Today article on Pew survey of teen social networking – includes statistics on habits of teens

http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2006/10/finding-balance-in-teen-use-of-social-media293.html - Finding Balance in Teen Use of Social Media

Extension Activities:

Student will go online and explore websites from Handout 3 to learn about resources to help with safety issues. Students will develop a personal do's and don'ts list for using the Internet when not supervised by a responsible adult. They will share this with their parents and agree to the conditions for online socializing. This will not only serve as a reminder but as a contract between students and parents.

Activity:

Have students review the article "The Professional Side of Online Networking" to see how important is it for students' future success to manage their online presence carefully.