

**Lesson 4 for Grades 9—12**

**Secrets, Surprises and Promises**

**PRINCIPLE**

Youth must learn how to respect their own health and safety, and that of others, by understanding the safety rules about secrets. They have a right to be safe, and they are allowed to create boundaries to protect themselves in situations that cause discomfort or violate the safety rules.

**CATECHISM / SCRIPTURE**

*“Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.”*  
—Jeremiah 1:8, New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV)

**OBJECTIVES**

Through this lesson, the adult Lesson Leader reinforces the parent's message about boundaries. After Lesson 4, youth should be better able to:

- Identify the boundary differences between secrets, surprises and promises
- Understand the safety rules with regard to secrets and promises:
  - Say “No!” when someone tries to make you keep a secret regarding safety
  - Try to leave the situation if you feel uncomfortable
  - Tell a safe adult as soon as possible (even if it didn't happen to you)
- Technology component: Understand similar boundary rules apply for online activities, too
- Begin to understand that if anybody does make them keep a secret, gives them an unsafe touch or shows them inappropriate material, it isn't the child's fault

**Background for Lesson Leaders:**

Before beginning this session, the Lesson Leader should read the *Teaching Boundary and Safety Guide*, as it gives a wealth of information regarding boundaries and how to address them.

Many of the boundary and safety rules for younger children also apply to older youth, though it may be communicated differently. Caring adults will still provide teenagers and “twens” with expectations and boundaries. Remind them they can always say “no” and are allowed to remove themselves from any situation if they're uncomfortable. If abuse or boundary violations occur, they need to know that you'll help to protect them regardless of the circumstances—and that abuse isn't their fault. The older youth become, the more you can outline other types of boundaries.

**This age group: Dealing with teenagers—key concept is “searching”**

This is the age where all the experiences that began with puberty—the physical changes and the developing emotions—accelerate rapidly as the teenager matures into a young adult. The self-consciousness deepens and matures. The world of “children” is now renounced. Teens believe in their immortality and may tend to be reckless in their behavior—in person and online. Although it would appear that they reject authority while defining their own independence, in reality, they rely on the strength and support they find in parents and other influential adults. Feeling supported and understood is important for this age group, as is upholding boundaries while the reasoning portions of their brains continue to develop. Teens have a great deal of personal freedom. This freedom also puts them at risk in various ways. Parents and guardians expect teens to take care of themselves and to ask for the help that they need. Caring adults must know that youths' online behavior and boundaries may need to be fortified.

**ACTIVITY OPTION #1: Play the (optional) introductory video as an icebreaker**

The introductory video for youth in this age range is designed to open a simple discussion about personal boundary safety. The video is brief and is not intended to be a substitute for the lesson itself. It's merely an introduction designed to “break the ice” and assist the transition of completing the interactive Lesson Activity options. If the video is shown as an optional activity, please use in conjunction with one of the additional activity options, because discussion and practice are the critical components needed to teach youth how to protect themselves. They learn best by “doing”; not just listening.

**ACTIVITY OPTION #2: Review and discuss key vocabulary words**

- **Rules**—a prescribed guide for conduct or action. We follow the rules to make sure we are safe—just like how we have a seatbelt rule to keep us safe in the car, or the safety rules before we cross the street. [For example, teach the child a simple rule for what to do if someone tries to touch him / her in an unsafe way, which is to say “No!”, try to get away, and tell an adult as soon as possible.]
- **Boundaries**—the limits that define one person as separate from another or from others. There are boundaries you can see (like a fence around a yard) and boundaries you can’t see with your eyes (like the comfort zone around us that we call our “personal space”). Boundaries vary depending on the relationship with the other person. For example, a boundary between a child and a grandparent is different than the boundary between a child and a teacher or coach.
- **Saying “No”**—to say “no” means to refuse, deny, reject or express disapproval of. This word is used to express a boundary and communicate that you do not want something to happen or continue. [Let youth know it’s OK to say “No” to an adult if they make you feel scared or uncomfortable, or if they touch your private body parts.]
- **Safe friends and safe adults**—safe people won’t hurt you without a good reason and won’t intentionally confuse you. They listen to and consistently respect boundaries, and follow the rules. [Explain that a child may have many safe friends and adults. Give youth examples of adult behavior that could hurt them, but may be necessary for the child’s safety, i.e. medical exams, vaccinations, throat swabs, removing splinters, stopping a child from running into the road, etc.]
- **Unsafe friends and unsafe adults**—unsafe friends and unsafe adults put a child at risk for emotional, spiritual and physical harm. These are people who place a child in danger for their own purposes without concern for the welfare of the child. They also do not consistently listen to the parents’ wishes or the child’s boundaries. [Tell youth we can know when someone is unsafe if they do not follow the rules or listen to our boundaries.]
- **Secret**—something kept hidden, never told or unexplained. Secrets exclude others and have potential to harm, sometimes causing the person involved to feel frightened or uncomfortable, fearful or sad. Secrets also send the message to youth that they, or someone else, will get into trouble if the secret is shared [For example, let youth know that there are no secrets when it comes to personal and physical safety. Tell youth it’s wrong for an adult or another child to ask to keep a secret about safety—especially unsafe touches—because that’s a way for people to get hurt. If an individual tries to make a child keep a secret or makes him / her feel frightened, the child must know to communicate this information right away to a parent or caring adult—and be reassured that the child will be protected regardless of threats or seeming consequences of “telling”.]
- **Surprise**—Surprises are typically happy. They cause feelings of happiness and joy. They are exciting, and temporary—meaning they will be revealed within a specific timeframe. As surprises are usually fun, they include activities like birthday surprises, gifts, trips and special treats. Surprises are inclusive and meant to be shared with others.
- **Problem**—Problems can be big and small; they can be small, little things like puzzles or big things like emergencies—and often need to be solved. They can involve fears and emotions. Sometimes we put boundaries in place to prevent problems, or to be more prepared for them. Whenever we have a problem that we don’t know how to solve, we should talk to a safe adult for help. If we have problems about safety issues, boundaries and secrets, we definitely need to talk to a safe adult. [For example, a house fire is a big problem for everyone who lives there, and for the people who live near that house. It’s a problem because it’s unsafe, and it could hurt people. When a house is on fire, help is needed right away. How do we get help with the problem of house fires? As soon as it’s safe, we “stop, drop and roll”, try to get out and call 911, and the fire department comes to help us fix the problem of the fire that’s too big to fix on our own.]
- **Threat**—When someone threatens you, they are stating that they are going to hurt, injure, damage or do something dangerous if you don’t do what they want you to do. You never have to listen to threats, but you should be prepared in case you experience them. [For example, someone might threaten you and say if you tell about an unsafe secret, they’re going to hurt your someone/something you know, and that you’re going to get into trouble. When you hear someone threaten you about an unsafe secret, that is when we definitely need to tell a safe adult.]
- **Promise**—When you make a promise, you are declaring that something specific will happen—that you will either “do” or “not do” something. Promises can be good! But, we should never make promises about keeping quiet regarding unsafe secrets.
- **Privacy**—Privacy is primarily about being respectful of a person’s personal boundaries or information. The things we appropriately can keep private include beliefs, opinions, ideas, traits, etc. Maintaining and honoring someone’s privacy does not result in hurting them or others, or compromising someone’s safety. And, complete privacy is not always applicable when it deals with our safety boundaries. When it comes to a situation where boundaries have been violated, someone is hurt or has the potential to be hurt, we should keep the information private insofar as we only tell the people who need to know to help us (and them) stay safe—such as our safe adults or other people who can help us. We also keep other things private, such as our private parts, which we keep private underneath our clothing when we’re in public. Privacy and secrecy are often confused—and the main difference is that unsafe secrecy involves situations where we deliberately keep something from someone else usually out of fear, where keeping the secret can negatively impact or harm ourselves or someone else.

**ACTIVITY OPTION #3: What, Why, Next—Safe Surprises, Unsafe Secrets & Privacy**

**Background:** This activity involves providing boundary information, helping youth to brainstorm, and then giving them specific scenarios to work out how they would respond to the situation if they are confronted with it.

**Note:** The worksheet template for this activity is included in the downloaded set of materials at the end of this packet.

Youth need to understand that there are significant differences between surprises and secrets, in addition to how privacy is incorporated into the conversation for both topics. The older we are, the more we consider elements of privacy in communication with others. However, they must know that if someone is trying to make them keep an unsafe secret, then they must tell a safe adult—which will involve having courage. When a youth knows the difference between unsafe secrets and safe surprises and that keeping a secret isn't OK, he/she's more likely to reveal boundary violations and/or abuse.

**SUPPLIES**

Dry erase board or Chalk board  
 Dry erase marker or Chalk  
 Eraser capabilities  
 Writing utensils  
 Pre-printed worksheets

**Preparation:** This activity has two parts. The first part involves a discussion with the entire group. For the second part, the Lesson Leader will need to determine ahead of time whether it will be an individual activity or a small-group activity. Regardless of whether it will be individually completed or done in a small-group style, the entire class will come back together to present the examples and discuss the answers. The following instructions differ depending on whether the Lesson Leader chooses to have the youth individually complete the activity or work in small groups.

**To utilize small groups:** The Lesson Leader will assign small groups of 2-3 youth to specific worksheet examples (the Lesson Leader may decide to specify the people in the groups or may allow youth to decide). The Lesson Leader should provide one worksheet per youth to be able to record answers, and to take home after the exercise. Small groups will have a select number of scenarios to complete, and larger class sizes will mean that each small group will have fewer scenarios to address. After the scenarios have been completed by the youth in their small groups, together, they will present their findings to the entire class for a larger group discussion. During the larger class discussion, the Lesson Leader will ensure that the youth are on the right track for each scenario and will fill in any gaps per the Answer Key below.

**To utilize individual completion:** The Lesson Leader will simply ensure that each youth has their own copy of the worksheet. After youth have an opportunity to complete the exercise, the Lesson Leader will lead another discussion with everyone using the Answer Key below.

**Discussion:** **Part 1:** First, briefly outline the following discussion items with the youth, checking in periodically to measure their comprehension.

**Talk to youth about unsafe secrets:**

- An unsafe secret is something that is intended to never be told. They're unsafe, especially when they have to do with our boundaries involving our bodies.
- You have a right to be safe, and for people to honor and respect your boundaries.
- When someone asks you to keep an unsafe secret, it can make you feel sad and scared, or uncomfortable. Sometimes they might even make you feel special or loved, because you might like the person who is asking you to keep a secret.
- Holding onto an unsafe secret might also cause us to feel guilty or ashamed. It can take great courage to do the right thing and reveal an unsafe secret either about ourselves or someone we know—but this is the right thing to do.
- Keeping silent about an unsafe secret only protects the person who is causing the harm, which allows them to keep on doing what they want to that person, and maybe others.
- If someone asks you to keep a secret about something unsafe, you have to tell a safe adult, even if the person told you not to or "swore you to secrecy". Sometimes the person might say that something is "confidential," which means the same thing as secret.
- Our friends might confide in us about something unsafe that happened to them. Sometimes when people confide in us, they are asking for help, even if they tell us not to tell anyone else.
- Sometimes people will try to scare you into making a promise about keeping secrets. The person might say that you'll get into trouble if you tell, or they might threaten you and say that they'll hurt you or someone else.

**Note:** In this activity, it's important for the Lesson Leader to acknowledge that there are adults and youth who do have good intentions, who attempt to make youth keep secrets without realizing that they might be dangerous. All types of secrets are dangerous because they might condition youth to keep secrets from unsafe people. With this in mind, be sure not to vilify anyone who does ask to keep a secret, and instead stress the importance of always taking that information to a safe adult. Remember that there will be youth who have already promised others to keep secrets, and they should not be made to feel guilty or ashamed about this.

They might threaten your reputation, or hold something they know over you as blackmail. If this happens, it's really important that you talk to a safe adult.

- Sometimes this is stressful and may even involve an element of fear, especially if we feel we've done something wrong, but telling a safe adult is the right thing to do.
- It's OK to talk about the unsafe secret with one of your safe adults, even if you promised not to tell. You can always talk to your safe adults!
- Sometimes, though, our safe adults might not act the way we expect them to, and if that happens it's even more important to get the information to a different safe adult—and keep going until you get help.
- If you've already kept a secret with someone that you now realize is unsafe, it is important to go to your safe adult (or a different one) and talk to them about it.

**Talk to youth about their safe adults:**

- Let's talk about the safe adults in your life.
  - Safe people won't hurt you without a good reason and won't intentionally confuse you (like digging into your finger to remove a splinter; it hurts, but it has to be done if there's a risk of infection). They listen to and consistently respect boundaries, and follow the rules.
- Who are some of your safe adults that you do have?
  - (Examples include: teachers, someone at church, principal, aunt, uncle, mom or dad, police officer, firefighter, etc.)

**Approach the topic of privacy with youth. Ask: how does privacy affect secrets? Explain:** Privacy is primarily about being respectful of a person's personal boundaries or information. The things we appropriately can keep private include beliefs, opinions, ideas, traits, etc. Maintaining and honoring someone's privacy does not result in hurting them or others, or compromising someone's safety. And, complete privacy is not always applicable when it deals with our safety boundaries. When it comes to a situation where boundaries have been violated, someone is hurt or has the potential to be hurt, we should keep the information private insofar as we only tell the people who need to know to help us (and them) stay safe—such as our safe adults or other people who can help us.

We also keep other things private, such as our private parts, which we keep private underneath our clothing when we're in public. Privacy and secrecy are often confused—and the main difference is that unsafe secrecy involves situations where we deliberately keep something from someone else usually out of fear, where keeping the secret can negatively impact or harm ourselves or someone else.

**Ask youth to brainstorm about what the differences and similarities are between Unsafe Secrets and Safe Surprises, to then be discussed with everyone:** Depending on class size, the Lesson Leader could simply discuss what's in the Chart, or record the Chart onto the board. To do so, create an empty table with filled-in header titles that looks similar to the table below. The Lesson Leader will then invite youth to give examples. If they give one example for one column, always ask them what the difference or similarity would be for the other column.

A helpful chart is listed below which shows the opposites between the unsafe secret and the safe surprise, that are separated into similarities and differences per the column on the left. If youth do not come up with examples on their own, feel free to help guide them. The Lesson Leader need not follow the exact order listed on the graph; instead, follow what the youth denote.

<b>UNSAFE SECRETS:</b>		<b>SAFE SURPRISES:</b>
<b>DIFFERENCES</b>	May cause feelings of sadness	Often cause feelings of happiness, excitement
	May cause feelings of shame or guilt	Often cause feelings of confidence
	May cause feelings of anger or betrayal	Shouldn't cause feelings of anger or betrayal
	Might involve threats regarding the safety of loved ones, including animals, or someone's reputation	Never involve threats regarding anyone's safety or reputation
	Could involve unsafe touches or images, boundary violations, feelings of discomfort, etc.	Might cause initial feelings of discomfort (if the person doesn't like surprises, or if the information is shocking)
	Are hidden	Are revealed
	Have potential to be kept forever	Are temporary
	Are never told	Are meant to be shared with others (eventually, at right time)
	Exclude others	Are inclusive
	Have potential to harm, or hurt someone's feelings	Have potential to bring joy
	Can sometimes make someone feel unlovable	Would never make someone feel unlovable
	Sometimes require courage to share	Sometimes require patience when waiting to share

<b>SIMILARITIES</b>	Might sound like they are fun (although it may not truly be fun for everyone)	Are fun (usually for everyone)
	Might make the recipient or bystander “special” to be involved	Might make the recipient or bystander “special” to be involved
	Could involve gifts or privileges	Could involve gifts or privileges
	Can be a burden (because of the weight of the problem)	Can be a burden (because of the excitement and desire to reveal, since waiting can be hard)
	May cause feelings of fear (scary)	Might involve feelings of slight apprehension

**Part 2:** The Lesson Leader will pass out the worksheets and ask youth to read each question and circle / highlight the correct response from the columns on the right, then answer “why” and “what next?”. Some examples may have several responses to identify. Answers will be discussed together as a large group once the youth finish the worksheets (where the Lesson Leader will utilize the Worksheet Answer Key below).

**Concluding statements to tell the youth once the activity is nearing completion:** If you’re in a situation where you don’t feel right, or you feel scared or uncomfortable, or nervous, anxious, humiliated or embarrassed, listen to your intuition! If someone is asking you to keep a secret, it’s ALWAYS OK to say “no” and it’s very important to tell a safe adult. This also applies if something happened to you in the past. It’s never too late to get help, even if the situation happened a long time ago.

### WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY:

#### Unsafe Secret or Safe Surprise: What, Why, Next?

1. **a.) Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if someone tells you about a prank they’re planning to do to someone that you realize could hurt the person, but you’re also told not to tell anyone?

Answer: *Unsafe secret*

*b.) Why? Because someone could get hurt; this may not be a safe activity and needs intervention.*

*c.) What next? You can always share something like this with your safe adults, and also with the friend who is going to be pranked. You could also ask the other friend not to do the prank at all. In more immediate and serious situations, you could also involve a supervisor or administrator who is on location.*

2. **a.) Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if you’re spending time with your friend and notice he has bruises all over his arms and legs? Your friend told you that his dad gets really angry sometimes and that’s “just what happens—if you’re really my friend, you’ll promise me you won’t tell anyone about it!” You promise not to say anything, but now you’re second guessing your decision.

Answer: *Unsafe secret*

*b.) Why? It violates the safety rules because your friend was hurt, and may continue to be hurt in the future. Keeping silent only protects the person who is causing harm, which allows them to keep doing what they want.*

*c.) What next? Talk to a safe adult, even though you promised you wouldn’t. Real friends get their friends to the right person for help when it’s needed. When it comes to the safety rules, it’s OK to break promises.*

**Note:** In this activity, the answers in italicized fonts in the answer key. However, there may be additional reasons as to why the secret may be unsafe (and, conversely, why the surprise might be safe) that youth may identify that are not conveyed in the explanation.

Some questions might also share both surprising and secretive elements to them. They will require additional clarification relating to appropriate privacy. When youth ask questions about how privacy comes into play, refer back to the definition and explanation listed in the lesson plan above, then compare it with the scenario in question and ask how it applies.

The Lesson Leader should be prepared for the youth to bring up other “what if” scenarios. Get through the worksheet first, and then address the additional scenarios. When this happens, refer to the chart and guide the students in deciding whether the proposed situation is a safe surprise or an unsafe secret.

3. **a.) Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if one of your parents wants to have a special dinner because a family member had a big accomplishment? What if you just want to tell the person that you're planning something, without telling them WHAT you're planning?

Answer: *Safe surprise*

b.) Why? *Because it's temporary, it will be revealed and shared, it is inclusive, and will be fun! However, there may be a privacy component here about giving some details and not all of them.*

c.) What next? *You can always share this with your safe adults, and in the meantime, keep the information about the dinner/treat private for a short amount of time until it can be revealed to the family member. If you wanted to share parts of the information with the recipient, you should first communicate to the person planning the surprise to see what information might be shared, when it can be shared and why it should or should not be shared.*

4. **a.) Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if your teacher tells you she has a surprise for you, and gives you a surprise gift, but says, "maybe one day we can tell others, but let's keep it our little secret for now"? You really like the gift and want to keep it. And, you know that your parents wouldn't be able to afford it. Plus, it makes you feel special that your teacher cares enough about you to get you a present. But, it's confusing that she called it a surprise when she also said you couldn't talk about it yet.

Answer: *Unsafe secret*

b.) Why? *This is a tough one! It's referred to as a surprise gift because you were surprised to receive it, but you're being asked to keep a secret that may or may not be told to others. You should never be asked to keep a secret from both of your parents, even if it's "called" a surprise. Gifts and surprises are meant to be shared, and we don't keep secrets about gifts forever.*

c.) What next? *Talk to a safe adult, because your teacher may not have good intentions.*

5. **a.) Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if your parents tell you that they're going to have a baby, and that you're going to have a little sibling, and ask that you don't tell anyone until they're ready to share the information publicly? They also tell you that even when they start to talk about it, they don't want you to ever post pictures of the new baby on social media.

Answer: *Safe surprise*

b.) Why? *This is a tough one! It's a safe surprise that you can temporarily keep because it will eventually be revealed and shared on a certain date, plus it's joyful and exciting. However, it also involves a privacy boundary that your parents are placing about how much information to provide about your sibling online.*

c.) What next? *Keep the information about the pregnancy private for a short amount of time until you get the green light to reveal it with others per the boundaries that your parents have set. After that, you'll have to follow the personal safety boundaries that your parents have set about what can and can't be posted online about the new little one.*

**Note:** In all of these scenarios about unsafe secrets, remind the youth that whether these types of scenarios happen to them, or happen to someone they know—it's can be really difficult to talk about situations that involve abuse and boundaries. Encourage them to always communicate with a safe adult—but if they aren't ready for that, then they can talk to a friend first, to ask that friend to help them have the courage to speak to a safe adult.

**Explain:** If you're the friend, do everything you can to get the person to the safe adult when involved with an unsafe secret, even if it means that you have to be the one to tell the safe adult on your own.

6. **a.) Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if your cousin tells you an uncle you both know has been touching her inappropriately for the past year and has made her look at pornography online, but wants you to keep it private and not tell anyone? The uncle is a police officer, and is well known and respected in the community. She begs you not to say anything to anyone else. She specifically said, "look, it's over now, I'm over it, and nothing can be done because no one is going to believe me over a police officer! Plus, everybody likes him! Our parents will be really upset, will probably say I did something wrong or they'll say I'm lying, and I don't want to deal with that."

Answer: *Unsafe secret*

b.) Why? *It violates the safety rules because the cousin has personal body boundaries that were crossed—no one is allowed to touch your private parts unless to keep you clean and safe (and these touches are brief, and never a secret). Your cousin wants you to keep quiet because she is afraid of what could happen with her parents not believing her, even though by not saying anything other youth could be molested, too. Sometimes people use their powerful jobs or likable personalities to be able to do what they want without caring about how others are hurt or affected, and that is never OK when it comes to personal safety boundaries—and makes it even more important that inappropriate behavior comes to light. Even though your cousin says that everything is OK and over now, this may not be true and your cousin may not realize the psychological effects of abuse. Sometimes when people confide in us, they are asking for help—even if they tell us not to tell anyone else. Secrets can be painful, and can cause sadness.*

c.) What next? *The right thing to do is to tell a safe adult right away. If family doesn't believe the information, then it's time to take the information to someone who can do something about it, such as a guidance counselor at school.*

7. **a.) Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if an older teen pulls up a girl's dress at school, takes a picture so others can see her underwear and bra underneath, and then messages it to others? Several of your classmates know about it, and have made fun of her, but no one wants to tell on him. You also know that the girl has been very upset, and has been skipping school because of it.

Answer: *Unsafe secret*

b.) Why? *It violates the safety rules because your friend's personal boundaries were violated several times. First, they were violated when someone pulled her skirt up, again when someone showed an image of her private parts (bra/chest/underwear—areas covered by a bathing suit) to others, again when her picture is shared electronically by others, and then every single time someone looks at the image. Even though this situation is including others in what they consider to be "fun", it's causing your friend feelings of sadness and fear, and certainly has great potential to harm your friend and her reputation.*

c.) What next? *Let your friend know that you're there for her, and tell a safe adult right away. This is the right thing to do whether any of the people in the situation are your friends or not.*

8. **a.) Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if you're in what you consider to be a loving relationship, but the other person doesn't seem to care when you say "no" when it comes to your body—and you don't want anyone else to know? Most of the relationship is awesome, but there are a lot of times where you're hurt and sad, and you feel like your boundaries aren't respected. You don't know if it's a big enough deal to talk to anyone about, because you've been told that all relationships have ups and downs. Plus—you don't want people to judge your boyfriend/girlfriend and say bad things about them, since they don't know the person like you do.

Answer: *Unsafe secret*

b.) Why? *It's an unsafe secret because you feel uncomfortable, and it violates the safety rules because your boundaries are not being upheld. Saying "no" is a powerful boundary, and should be honored, especially when it comes to your body and personal boundaries. You deserve respect and have a right to be safe—and feel safe, especially in the context of a relationship. It's true that relationships can have ups and downs, but if you're consistently feeling hurt and sad, it's often a sign that something is wrong, and needs to be addressed. Even if people don't know your girlfriend/boyfriend like you do, it doesn't mean that they can't objectively say that something is wrong.*

c.) What next? *Tell a safe adult right away.*

9. **a.) Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if your coach asks you questions about your private parts, including what they look like? The coach is known as a "cool" person, and seems to never really care about the rules. You don't really want to discuss your private parts with your coach, but feel stuck because you don't want your spot on the team to be jeopardized. You answered the coach's question, but you don't know if you should say anything about the encounter or just keep it quiet.

Answer: *Unsafe secret*

b.) Why? *If you were to keep quiet about this encounter, it would be an unsafe secret because it involves a situation that has caused discomfort, and it crosses your boundaries. You never have to speak about what your private parts look like to others. Safe adults should never ask you questions about what your private*

*parts look like, unless you've disclosed discomfort or pain, or it's someone like a parent or doctor who's helping to ensure that you're safe and healthy.*

*c.) What next? Talk to a safe adult.*

- 10. a.) Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if your friend tells you that they have a crush on a friend and asks you not to say anything to anyone?

Answer: *Safe surprise*

*b.) Why? This is a tough one! It's a safe surprise that's probably temporary and fun, that you can keep from the object of the crush. However, it doesn't mean that you have to keep the information quiet from your safe adults—who are always safe to communicate with about surprises or secrets.*

*c.) What next? Keep the information private from peers or the object of the crush, but, you can always tell a safe adult about information like this.*

- 11. a.) Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if your dad's best friend comes over and asks you to hand him his phone that clearly displays pornography, and then asks if he can touch you in your private parts just like in the video? He told you that the things they do in the video are fun, and that you should let him you because it will be educational and important for you to learn! When you refuse, he said that your dad will believe him over you, and that you "don't want to know what will happen to you when you tell." Now you're scared to say anything. You used to think he was one of your safe adults, and now you don't know who to trust, and definitely don't want to tell your dad because it's his best friend. Maybe everyone is better off not knowing?

Answer: *Unsafe secret*

*b.) Why? Unsafe secrets exclude others, and have potential to harm. It's understandable that you wouldn't want to tell your dad because it might cause him feelings of anger and sadness. However, this guy is clearly not a safe adult, and has even threatened you if you don't do what he wants. He makes the activity sound like it's fun, but it's not fun when it's a violation of your boundaries.*

*c.) What next? Talk to a different safe adult.*

- 12. a.) Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if Jordan sneaks out of the house at night to go out with friends and has a horrible situation occur to her, but doesn't want to tell anyone? During the outing, Jordan starts drinking, and is cornered by someone she knows when no one else is around. Jordan tried to get away and said "no", but the person didn't listen and violated her in a serious way and forced her to do things she didn't want to do. During the encounter, Jordan is horrified and upset, but is also scared that her body may have experienced pleasure, even though she was extremely upset and uncomfortable throughout the entire, awful experience. She doesn't know what to do. She can't tell her parents because she knows she will get in trouble with them—and she already feels awful enough. And, she feels like the whole experience was her fault anyway because she snuck out and started drinking, two things she knows she wasn't supposed to do. Jordan asks herself, "since it's my problem, isn't it easier to keep it quiet and try to deal with it on my own?" She doesn't even know where to start and is feeling exhausted with trying to hide it all and pretend that everything is OK.

Answer: *Unsafe secret*

*b.) Why? It's understandable that Jordan is having a hard time dealing with what has happened. The situation was not her fault, even if she made questionable decisions leading up to the event where she was violated. The truth is, Jordan's body is her own, and no one has a right to violate her boundaries, whether she has been drinking or not. The word "no" is also a very powerful boundary and should be respected. The wrong thing to do in this situation is to try and keep quiet about this problem and try to handle it on her own. There could be serious health consequences that should be considered, and a safe adult will also see that she receives appropriate medical care and treatment.*

*c.) What next? Jordan should tell the safe adult she is worried and that it's really scary to talk about what happened. This type of information may help the adult to listen to her more carefully without reacting. However, if Jordan won't communicate with someone who can help, you will need to talk to a safe adult on her behalf, as her friend.*



13. a.) **Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if the adult leader of your school club pulls you aside and asks if you're going to be at school next Monday because you're going to win an award—but not to tell anyone else at school about it?

Answer: *Safe surprise*

b.) *Why? Because it's temporary, fun, and will be revealed to everyone. Also, the adult isn't saying that you can't share the information with your safe adults.*

c.) *What next? Tell your safe adults, and work hard to remain quiet about the upcoming event where you'll receive an award.*

14. a.) **Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if Joseph was sexually abused by a man at his church, and turned to drugs and can't stop? Joseph always used to receive special privileges from the man, and enjoyed the attention—until the man started behaving inappropriately with him. Joseph didn't realize that the man was taking advantage of him at first, but over time, it became abundantly clear. Joseph worries that people will be able to suspect that he was abused by a man, and worries what people will think and say about Joseph as a result. He can't stop with the drugs because it's the only way he feels better, but he's terrified that people will figure out his two major secrets.

Answer: *Unsafe secret*

b.) *Why? Both of the secrets in this scenario are burdens, are causing feelings of fear and anxiety, are hidden from others and have harmed Joseph. It's understandable that Joseph is having a hard time with what has happened. However, continuing to keep it all a secret gives the situation more power over him, and doing the drugs hurts him more than he realizes. Keeping quiet about it is only going to hurt him more, and could potentially open the door for other people to be abused, too, whereas disclosing about the abuse opens the door to give others courage about abuse that may have happened to them.*

c.) *What next? Revealing both items is the best way to get help and start relieving the stress. Joseph will need to have the courage to speak up about what happened to him, and how it's affecting him.*

#### ACTIVITY OPTION #4: Boundary Rules and Safety—Secret cryptogram

**Background:** It's important that we teach youth that it's not OK to keep unsafe secrets—not even seemingly little ones like eating sweets when we're not supposed to or watching a movie we know we aren't supposed to see. The reason for this is because we are letting them know beyond a shadow of a doubt that it's not their responsibility to keep larger, graver secrets either—such as someone who is violating them or exploiting them with unsafe actions or touches, etc.

**Preparation:** The Lesson Leader should review the Key Vocabulary words as part of the preparation for this lesson. Allow for enough time to include the discussion and the completion of the worksheet during the class period.

**Activity:** This activity addresses appropriate boundaries, secrets, surprises and safety plans via interactive discussion, and then gives youth an opportunity to share what they've learned by completing a worksheet.

The Lesson Leader will need to decide if the youth will work in small groups or individually for the worksheet portion of the lesson in Part II. If in groups, the activity could be a competition to see who can complete their assigned cryptogram first.

**Note:** The worksheet template for this activity is included in the downloaded set of materials at the end of this packet.

#### SUPPLIES

Writing utensils  
Pre-printed worksheets

**Note:** On the worksheet, the groups will have the option to complete either:

Secret Cryptogram #1 (has a shorter sentence, but only has a minimal hint that provides the most common letter), *OR*,

Secret Cryptogram #2 (has a longer sentence, but has a more significant hint that provides all of the vowels).

**Discussion:** **Part I: Ask youth the following questions, listen to their responses, gently correct if necessary, and explain the answers:**

- Have you ever thought about what personal boundaries are? What are they?
  - There are non-negotiable boundaries, such as the boundary safety rules, which include the fact that you have a right to be safe, and that no one is allowed to violate that right or touch you or your private parts, or make you feel uncomfortable—whether online or in person. Boundaries include figuring out what you do and don't like, what makes you comfortable vs. uncomfortable, what makes you feel fearful, and how you should be treated with respect.
- Why are safety boundaries important?
  - They're important because they keep us safe, and they let us know that we have a right to be safe.
  - They also give us tools to communicate if we have a problem, if we're scared, or if we're uncomfortable.
- What are secrets?
  - Secrets are pieces of information or actions that people don't want us to share, or that we are fearful of sharing.
- How do we know how to identify secrets?
  - They're kept hidden and are meant to never be told. They keep other people in the dark, and can make us feel scared or uncomfortable, or sad. They also sometimes involve situations where someone might get into trouble if the secret is shared.
- How do secrets relate to safety boundaries?
  - Boundary safety involves rules like when we tell a safe adult when we're uncomfortable or scared, and how we tell a safe adult right away if someone tries to touch or see our private parts. Secrets are an important part of our boundary safety plan, because they impact our safety. When it comes to your safety and the boundary rules, it's not OK to keep secrets.
- Can we keep little secrets?
  - If someone tells us that it's just a little secret and that it's OK to keep it, it's still not ok! We can keep surprises for a very short amount of time because we know we will eventually share the surprise, but must always tell unsafe secrets to our safe adults.
- What if our best friend asks us to?
  - Sometimes our best friends might ask us to keep secrets, but even in those situations it isn't OK to keep them.
- What if no one told us a secret, but we feel like we have a problem? Can we keep that a secret?
  - Problems can be big and small; they can be small, little things like puzzles or big things like emergencies—and often need to be solved. They can involve fears and emotions.
  - Sometimes we put boundaries in place to prevent problems, or to be more prepared for them.
  - We must also talk to our safe adults when we feel like we have a big or little problem. Problems are never meant to be kept silent or kept secret, because that is unsafe. Problems should always be shared with people who can help us, because we shouldn't carry heavy burdens on our own. (Give age-appropriate examples of sharing the load).
- Are secrets and surprises the same thing?
  - No, sometimes they might look similar but they aren't the same. Surprises are happy and joyful. They're temporary, and meant to be shared with others, like when we have a surprise party, or when we buy a special present for someone's birthday, or if we've made a special desert for someone because they did a good job. These can always be shared with safe adults.
- What do we know about safe friends and safe adults?
  - Safe people won't hurt you without a good reason and won't intentionally confuse you (like digging into your finger to remove a splinter; it hurts, but it has to be done if there's a risk of infection). They listen to and consistently respect boundaries, and follow the rules.
  - If you have a problem or encounter a situation that violates the safety rules—or even just makes you feel uncomfortable, it is right to tell a safe adult about it. No one should ever ask you to keep unsafe touches a secret—even if the touch tickled or felt good. It's never OK for anyone to make you feel uncomfortable, or unsafe. You have a right to be safe!
- What is privacy, and what is OK to keep private?

- Privacy is primarily about being respectful of a person’s personal boundaries or information. The things we appropriately can keep private include beliefs, opinions, ideas, traits, etc.
- We also keep other things private, such as our private parts, which we keep private underneath our clothing when we’re in public.
- Don’t I also have a right to privacy regarding my boundaries? Where is the line?
  - Yes, you do, but not when the information or situation it could hurt you or someone else.
  - Maintaining and honoring someone’s privacy does not result in hurting them or others, or compromising someone’s safety. And, complete privacy is not always applicable when it deals with our safety boundaries. In a situation where boundaries have been violated, someone is hurt or has the potential to be hurt, we should keep the information private insofar as we only tell the people who need to know to help us (and them) stay safe—such as our safe adults or other people who can help us.
  - Privacy and secrecy are often confused—and the main difference is that unsafe secrecy involves situations where we deliberately keep something from someone else usually out of fear, where keeping the secret can negatively impact or harm ourselves or someone else.

**Ask the following question, and take note of the youths’ answers:** What are examples of situations that we must always share with safe adults?

**Supply them with additional examples that would automatically prompt them to speak to a safe adult.**

- If someone tries to touch or violate our private parts, or our friends’ private parts.
- If someone gives you a gift and tells you not to tell, or puts conditions on gifts.
- If someone says, “it’s our little secret” when they tell you something important.
- If someone gives you something exclusive, and says that you should keep it just between the two of you.
- If someone says mean things about a friend, but tells you not to repeat to anyone else.
- If someone tells you how a friend was hurt, but asks you not to tell anyone else about it.

### Part II: Say the following to youth as you pass out the template sheets

Now that we have a better idea of our boundary rules, and unsafe secrets and safe surprises, we’re going to complete this cryptogram. Please decide if you’re going to choose #1 or #2 for the race. The Secret Cryptogram #1 has a shorter sentence, but only has a minimal hint of providing the most common letter. The Secret Cryptogram #2 on the next page has a longer sentence, but has a more significant hint of providing all of the vowels. Hints are at the bottom of the page if you choose to use them.

**Concluding statements:** When people ask us to keep unsafe secrets, it’s a problem. And problems should never be kept secret. So, the cryptogram is what it feels like when you have a problem. It can feel all “tangled” up, confusing with lots of different possible options—that can make you feel stuck. Sometimes it might even feel hopeless. But that’s not true! Sometimes we just need to see problems from a different angle—and friends can help us do that, and they can always help with getting us to a safe adult. There’s always someone who can help us when we don’t know how best to help ourselves.

Even if it feels like you have a really big problem, there’s nothing that is so big that you can’t get help. You always need to communicate scary problems or unsafe secrets to a safe adult.

### Worksheet Answer Key:

**Cryptogram #1 phrase:** MAINTAINING AND HONORING SOMEONE’S PRIVACY DOES NOT RESULT IN HURTING THEM OR THEIR SAFETY.

**Cryptogram #1 key:**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
24	7	12	2	17	13	25	3	20	26	21	19	6	10	22	16	11	8	23	15	1	9	5	18	14	4

**Cryptogram #2 phrase:** IF SOMEONE’S BOUNDARIES HAVE BEEN VIOLATED, SOMEONE IS HURT OR HAS POTENTIAL TO BE HURT, WE MUST TELL SOMEONE TO HELP THEM AND KEEP THEM SAFE.

**Cryptogram #2 key:**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
9	19	23	8	20	18	12	2	4	22	16	15	11	5	14	13	7	24	3	26	25	10	17	21	6	1

**ACTIVITY OPTION #5: Relationships, Secrets and Surprises—Crossword**

**Background:** This activity presents scenarios discussing healthy relationships, secrets and surprises, and then completing a fill-in-the-blank crossword puzzle. Ultimately, youth will learn that there are no secrets when it comes to personal safety, and that they must always communicate with a safe adult.

**Note:** The worksheet template for this activity is included in the downloaded set of materials at the end of this packet.

**Activity:** The purpose of this 2-part activity is to utilize a safety discussion to help youth apply their safety knowledge to successfully complete the worksheet and be better prepared in the event they're in a tough situation involving unhealthy relationships or secrets.

**SUPPLIES**

Writing utensils  
Pre-printed worksheets

After the discussion of Part 1, youth will be presented with a crossword worksheet in Part 2, with opportunities to fill in the blanks for use in the crossword.

**Preparation:** The Lesson Leader should review the Key Vocabulary words as part of the preparation for this lesson. Allow for enough time to include the discussion and the completion of the worksheet during the class period.

**Discussion:** **Part 1: The Lesson Leader will discuss the following items before providing and explaining the worksheet.** Questions to help the youth brainstorm are included in the discussion text:

All relationships have boundaries—and good ones have healthy boundaries. Healthy relationships that we have with our friends, families and loved ones have specific aspects of them that are important. For example, in healthy relationships, we aren't afraid to set and uphold our boundaries, and conversely, other people respect those boundaries. When people respect our boundaries, we feel safe and comfortable. Some boundaries are a "given"; they're obvious—such as, it's obvious that it's not OK to punch someone in the face. In relationships, sometimes boundaries aren't as obvious, and it's important that when you have them, that you communicate them with others. And it's equally important that the other person honors your boundaries.

What are some additional signs of healthy boundaries?

- Saying "no" to things that you don't like or want that concern your personal health and safety (saying "no" to your parents because you don't want to wash dishes is an entirely different situation)
- Making decisions about relationships based on whether or not they will be good for you
- Noticing when someone else has inappropriate boundaries
- Upholding your personal values despite what other people want or ask of you
- Respecting yourself enough to not give someone a part of yourself just so that they will like you
- Moving carefully and slowly into different phases of relationships

All of us have safe people in our lives who are there to protect us. They won't hurt us without a good reason, such as having to take us to the doctor to get a shot, get medicine or remove a splinter, etc.,—which aren't fun, but they do protect us and we need them to be healthy. Safe adults and friends won't try to confuse or scare us. They listen to our boundaries and the rules that our parents have given us, and they follow the rules. Healthy relationships mean that people ask our permission, care about our feelings, and are respectful of our opinions even when they're different. Healthy relationships include people who uphold our boundaries, including those that are physical, verbal, emotional, etc. You might have lots of safe friends and safe adults who participate with you in mutually safe, healthy relationships.

How do you know what your boundaries are? Sometimes we don't, and we have to figure them out! There are non-negotiable boundaries, such as the boundary safety rules, which include the fact that you have a right to be safe, and that no one is allowed to violate that right or touch you or your private parts, or make you feel uncomfortable—whether online or in person. Boundaries include figuring out what you do and don't like, what makes you comfortable vs. uncomfortable, what makes you feel fearful, and how you should be treated with respect.

What are some tips to setting boundaries? Are there any others that you can think of?

- Take the time to figure out what you do and don't like

- Don't be afraid to say "no"
- Be honest about what you want and what makes you feel comfortable—communication is important
- Be specific
- Be consistent
- Be careful not to compromise your personal values for what others want

Unhealthy relationships are different, because there are usually issues with boundaries. This is different from just misunderstanding one another—which can happen even in healthy relationships and can clear up with communication and respect. There are certain things about unhealthy relationships that would automatically make them a problem—such as if the other person:

- Tries to alienate you from others
- Gives you ultimatums about what you can and can't do
- Threatens you (either to harm you, someone else, or even themselves, if you don't do something they want)
- Creates unrealistic rules; says you must "always" or "never" do something specific
- Lies to you
- Gives you silent treatment
- Gets jealous of your interactions with others
- Tries to control you
- Won't take "no" for an answer, etc.

**Note:** It may be difficult for some youth to determine whether a relationship is healthy or unhealthy. Contributing factors might come from authority figures in the youth's life (i.e., parents, teachers, etc.), who issue ultimatums or create strict rules for safety, growth or well being. It may also be unpleasant or even difficult to follow these rules, even if they overall benefit the youth. Examples may be general hygiene rules, finishing homework before leisure activities, wearing seatbelts in care, etc. But, unhealthy relationships are very different than these examples. When in doubt, the youth should ask a safe adult.

It's also a sign of an unhealthy boundary when *you* react or respond in a certain way:

- When you let others decide how you should live your life and control you when in a relationship
- When you change your values to get someone to like you more
- When you say "yes" to something that you don't really want
- When you look at others to tell you your self-worth
- When you consistently and repeatedly experience negative feelings, but don't end the relationship because you are fearful of letting the relationship go
- When you walk on eggshells, justify the other person's behavior or you go along with what they want because it's easier
- When you can't be yourself

In addition to unhealthy relationships, there are sometimes people in our lives who are unsafe. They do risky things, and sometimes scare us. They don't always listen to our boundaries, and sometimes they do things that we know are wrong, and make us feel uncomfortable. We know when someone is unsafe because they don't follow the rules or listen to our boundaries—like when we say "NO" or tell them that we don't like something. You're allowed to say "no" when it comes to your boundaries and the safety rules. That's what it means to place a boundary, and you have a right to be safe.

Unsafe people sometimes also ask us to keep an unsafe secret. They might make us promise not to tell, and we might be fearful that we are going to get into trouble if we do tell about the secret. They might even threaten to do something bad to us or someone else we know. Sometimes it makes us feel uncomfortable, and sad. Ultimately, it could mean they aren't being respectful of our boundaries when we feel this way as a result.

What are some other ways that we feel when our boundaries have been affected? Examples include: Angry, anxious, upset, hurt, embarrassed, ashamed, guilty, "unpleasant", violated, "off", doubtful, minimized, disrespected, ill, nauseated, etc.

Unsafe secrets are a part of unhealthy relationships. It's important to know that there can't be any unsafe secrets when it comes to your safety. It's wrong for an adult or another child to ask you to keep a secret about your safety or about someone else's safety—especially unsafe touches—because that's a way for people to get hurt.

It's also possible that our *safe* friends and *safe* adults in our healthy relationships might tell us to keep a secret. They might not realize that asking you to keep secrets is unsafe for everyone. It's also OK if someone has made you promise to keep a secret in the past, because maybe they didn't know the safety rules. However, it's really important, regardless of whether it's a safe or unsafe person, that we always tell another safe adult when someone makes us feel uncomfortable or makes us promise to keep an unsafe secret.

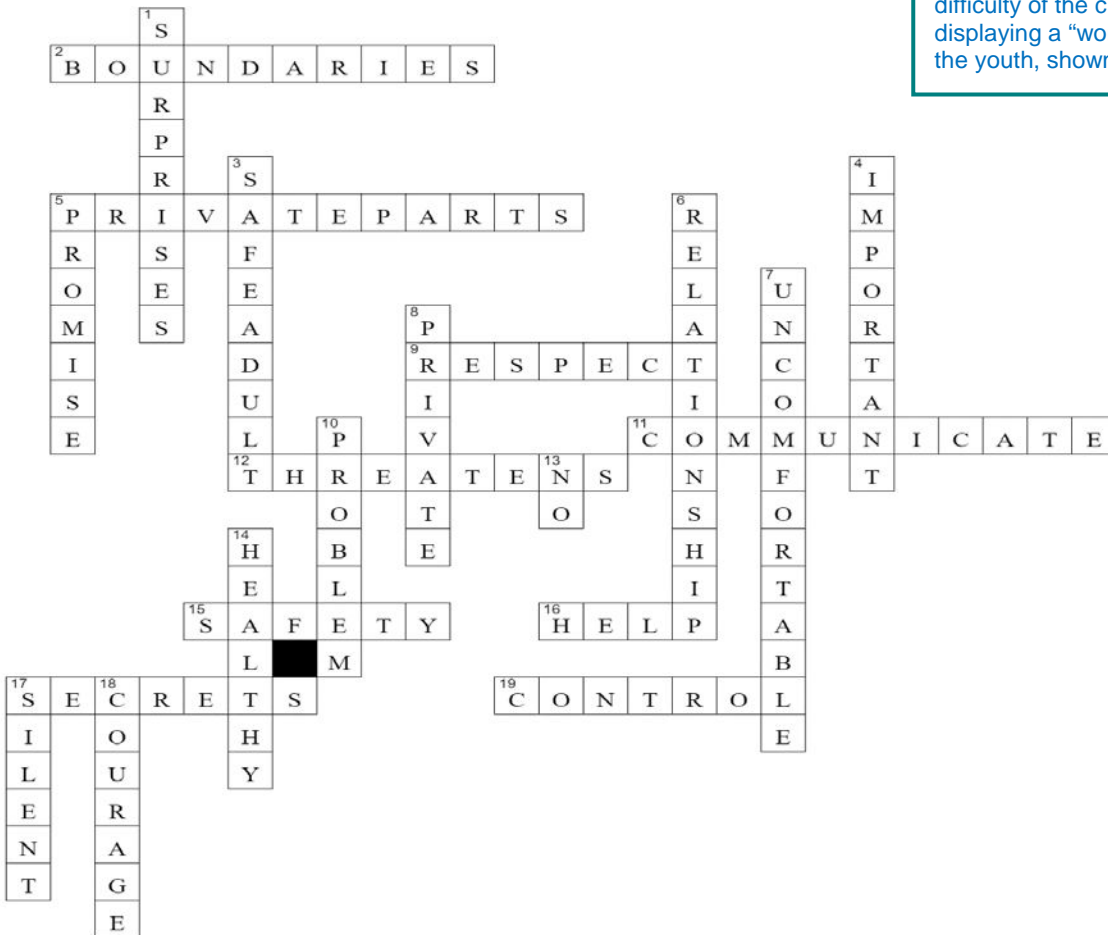
Sometimes it takes a lot of courage to speak up for ourselves or others about boundaries, or communicate to a safe adult when there's a problem—and that's OK. You can also ask a friend to go with you to talk to a safe adult. And, you can be the friend in a reversed situation, who goes and gets the necessary adult help. This is what being a true

friend is all about.

**Part II: The Lesson Leader will pass out the worksheet and narrate instructions.** Invite youth to complete the worksheet. A discussion with everyone will follow to go over the answers and address the concluding statements; please see below for the Answer Key.

**Concluding statements:** When people ask us to keep unsafe secrets, it’s a problem. And problems should never be kept secret. Even if it feels like you have a really big problem, there’s nothing that is so big that you can’t get help. You always need to communicate big problems or unsafe secrets to a safe adult.

**WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY:**



**Note:** The Lesson Leader may lessen the difficulty of the crossword by writing / displaying a “word bank” on the board for the youth, shown below.

Word Bank
surprises
secrets
courage
relationship
safety
uncomfortable
help
no
private parts
silent
promise
respect
problem
private
safe adult
boundaries
communicate
threatens
healthy
important
control

**ACTIVITY OPTION #6: Secrets, Grooming and Online Case Studies**

**Background:** Privacy is a tricky subject when applying the concept to Internet-based activities. Youth online are constantly experiencing situations that encourage them to lower personal boundaries and share personal information. The idea of online privacy is a hard subject for youth to employ when they have grown up using the Internet for practically everything. There are also positive and negative aspects to the Internet, and lots of fun ways to utilize it safely. However, not every situation is safe, and there are people who try to harm others online. This activity looks to address online privacy as youth become older, while also helping to address diverse situations involving secrets.

**Note:** The worksheet template for this activity is included in the downloaded set of materials at the end of this packet.

- SUPPLIES**
- Writing utensils
  - Pre-printed worksheets
  - Additional paper

**Preparation:** The Lesson Leader should review the Key Vocabulary words as part of the preparation for this lesson. Allow for enough time to include the discussion and the completion of the worksheet during the class period. This can be an individual activity or a group activity.

**Activity:** This 2-part activity addresses appropriate online boundaries, secrets, surprises and safety plans via interactive discussion, and then gives youth an opportunity to share what they've learned by completing a worksheet.

The Lesson Leader will need to decide if the youth will work in small groups or individually for the worksheet portion of the lesson in Part II. If in groups, each group may tackle one case study scenario to present to the class.

**Discussion:** **Part I: The Lesson Leader will discuss the following items before providing and explaining the worksheet. Ask the youth:**

What are some elements that are safe and unsafe to share online?

- Typically safe:
  - Interests, hobbies, some expressions of art, etc.
  - Photos are something that are a judgement call depending on the account's security settings, and only with permission. Photos of private parts of our bodies or someone else's body are never safe to share online.
  - Conversations online with people you don't know in real life can be permissible, but depend on several factors.
- Typically unsafe:
  - Sharing personal information such as home addresses, frequently-visited places, names of schools, physical locations, phone numbers, passwords (and images that show any of the above)
  - Login names / user names that are too revealing
  - Conversations about sex

Why are some of these unsafe? Risks include, but are not limited to:

- Cyberbullying
- Exposure to unsafe material
- People themselves who are unsafe (such as people with bad intentions)
- Risk of sexual exploitation; conversations are often a tool used by people to groom youth.
- Identity theft/scams/hacking due to revealing too much personal information or being careless with information (such as user IDs or passwords)

Are online predators a legit issue?

- Yes, surprisingly so. Apart from people who are foolish and unkind on the Internet, or just make poor decisions, there are actually people who intend to exploit youth, sometimes in a sexual way. The person sees how "far" they can get in the conversation and how willing the youth is to converse back, which is one step in what could be a very manipulative grooming process. They look for ways that teens and youth show vulnerability, and then see how they can insert themselves into the situation to provide "support" or make it seem as if they're interested in helping.

How would cyberbullies and online predators be different?

- Cyberbullies, through their actions, might start out nice, but they can also be very unpleasant relatively quickly. Cyberbullies intimidate others through the internet using websites, email, chats or social media. Even though their goals are for exploitation, online predators who are grooming youth for sexual reasons typically seem to be trustworthy and nice—they can act like a friend or even romantic throughout the grooming and coercion process. Online predators want sexual gratification, or seek to exploit for money or immigration.

What do you know about the grooming process?

- There are different elements to the grooming process, which has been determined by studying and interviewing people who have been convicted of grooming youth either in person, or online with transition to in-person grooming.
- Grooming can be done by someone you know, while in person, or online. It can also be done by a stranger online. Usually, when we are victimized by sexual abuse relating to contact, 90% of the time it's someone we know and trust, like a coach, teacher, friend of the family, minister, etc., or even a family member. However, online, it's very difficult to know if the person is someone we know or not, and the relationship usually begins via a stranger, and not someone you already know. An online predator is not necessarily a "creepy old man." Online predators can be anyone.
- The main point of grooming is to sexually abuse a youth or teen. This can be done over the Internet by tricking the teen to behave sexually and take/share photos or videos, or, by attempting to create opportunities for face-to-face live interaction in real life.

- Grooming is when someone attempts to gain your trust through manipulation to get you to do things. In live settings, this involves physical grooming to desensitize you to touch; community grooming where the person also works on manipulating the people around you to gain their trust; and emotional grooming to make you trust them more via gift-giving, fulfilling needs for you or even your family and friends, isolating you from others, listening to you, paying you compliments, giving you attention and doing things to make you feel more dependent and emotionally attached—all while asking you to keep any intimate or inappropriate behavior a secret.
- Grooming doesn't always happen quickly—usually it starts slow and “normal.” Every situation is different, and part of grooming means that the person is always trying to test your boundaries to see how far things can be taken each time, and how willing you are to share yourself, or information about yourself with them.
- Someone who is being groomed may not realize what is happening, and may not be using caution because of the emotional connection.

How is online grooming different than regular grooming? Which one is easier for the potential abuser?

- Grooming, online, on the other hand, is different and easier for predators for a variety of reasons. Online grooming is easier for someone with bad intentions because they can learn a lot about the youth by reviewing everything posted via social media, which helps them to target vulnerabilities faster without even having to make contact. In addition, the adult might send out a lot of “friend requests” via social media, gaming platforms or streaming/chat platforms, which gives them faster access to a wider group of youth.
- Many youth don't realize that they are actually targeted online based on what they post and share about themselves. The person who grooms them is looking for a vulnerability to exploit to more easily gain the youth's trust and access to what is typically sexual types of behavior or activities.
- The anonymity of the internet creates a false sense of security and intimacy. Online predators take advantage of this to manipulate others.

Is anyone immune from grooming or exploitation?

- The honest answer here is, “no”.
- Statistically, youth and teens from every demographic, gender, family situation, socioeconomic level, etc., have been groomed and sexually exploited. No one is truly immune, which is why it is so important to be aware of some of these classic grooming situations, and be prepared now about how to navigate them.
- Most importantly, you want to ensure that you know how to get help if you realize that you, OR a friend, is experiencing something similar.

Knowing that grooming can be challenging to identify, when thinking about yourself, or even for a friend, when should you be more concerned?

- When thinking about online predators or people with unsafe intentions: If an older man or woman is messaging a teen or child, even if it makes the youth feel special, it's a problem—and could also lead to illegal activity. Teens and youth should be suspicious of an older person messaging them or communicating with them over social media, and should never agree to meet someone in person whom they've only interacted with online—unless a parent comes along, too.
- If people online seem to try to gauge the level of involvement your parents and friends have with you—they might be trying to ascertain whether or not you'd be believed if the story did come out.
- If the person online tries to create scenarios to isolate you from others, gets upset with you for spending time with your friends, or not answering your messages quickly enough.
- If the person online talks about sex. This is done to desensitize the youth, and to see how far the conversation can go. They might tell you that they want to “teach you something” or show you images or videos to try and normalize what they're saying.
- If the person ever seems to try to control you, by using secrecy or blackmail. They might try to make you feel embarrassed or ashamed, or tell you that “you're too far in now” or that “you chose this” or that “it's your fault.” They use these tools to try and keep you from telling anyone about what is happening.

If you ever feel threatened or unsafe, bullied or victimized (or if one of your friends has had this happen) online, it needs to be reported both to the police and to [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com)

- If you do feel that someone is bullying you online, or sending you threatening messages, report them to the app administration or website administration! Block the person/account, save the offending material, and tell a safe adult. You'll also need to contact the police and potentially the cell phone provider, depending on the situation and how serious it is.
- If you're aware that someone you know is being bullied online, you could be responsible for the repercussions that occur if you didn't address it. Conversely, if you know that a specific person is bullying someone else, you could be held responsible and legally considered guilty as the person who is doing the bullying.



What does it mean to be a real friend?

- Real friends protect their friends and stop inappropriate behavior by communication and reporting.
- Don't share damaging images or gossip about other people. Think twice before posting rumors or gossip.
- Definitely do not share naked images of other people or of yourself.
- Think twice when you consider what you post and how it could affect or hurt someone else, and particularly their reputation.

What are some other things we do to protect ourselves online?

- Avoid “friending” people online who we don't know, or accepting requests from people we don't know. The problem is that it is extremely difficult and sometimes impossible to know who the person on the other side of the screen is. Ask the person how they know you, verify that the person is who they say they are. What might their intentions be? Take a look at their images and what they post—would you really want to be friends with that person and have them associated with your account?
- Go through your social media accounts one by one and clean them up.
  - First and foremost, update the security settings so people who are not your immediate friends may not see the content. Any content could be used against you, or used to identify you, and potentially used to groom you for someone else's interest. Take control of your life and online digital footprint!
  - Go through your social media account and remove everything that seems to be “oversharing” or “too personal”, illegal, violent, inappropriate or sexual. This includes anything that someone else could see years later and hold against you, such as a college admissions team, or someone who wants to hire you for a job, or even someone with bad intentions. Scrub your profiles and pages of party pics, of embarrassing situations, of revealing photos, etc.
  - Think about your online persona. Are you proud of who you portray yourself to be? Would your loved ones be proud to see what you're posting?
- In the future, think twice about what you post, view and respond to while online.

**Part II: The Lesson Leader will pass out the worksheet and narrate instructions.** Invite youth to complete the worksheet. A discussion with everyone will follow to go over the answers and address the concluding statements; please see below for the Answer Key. Depending on the size of the class, consider “think, pair, share” or five small groups, each taking a different scenario and then reporting to the whole class.

**Concluding statements:** Remember, there are really great things about the Internet. It connects you to people you otherwise would never have been able to learn from in “real life” and has a wealth of knowledge and information. However, everything that you say and do online adds to your online identity and digital footprint and can be with you forever. Others can also take advantage of you based on what you share about yourself or others. Be extremely careful about what you do, how it could reflect about your character, and how it could affect others.

### WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY:

**Online Case Study / Scenario 1:** Emily is friends with a lot of people online. She's constantly posting to try and get more friends added to her social media accounts and loves it when people “like” her posts or comment on them—even if she doesn't know them. She's assured her family that she never posts any super personal information, but as her friend, you've noticed that her posts are becoming less guarded, and she's sharing a lot about her life and feelings regarding specific big life changes that have been occurring at home. She's also posting images that identify who she is, where she lives and where she hangs out. For example, she's posting pictures and videos that she has taken in front of your school, with the school mascot and in front of her home and tagged people who don't have any privacy settings on their accounts. When you talked to her about it and warned her to stop “oversharing,” she became very defensive and told you that it's none of your business, and to keep your thoughts to yourself and no one else. It's ironic because you were recently together at the mall and had someone approach you and ask personal questions and Emily quickly shut down the conversation and moved on, yet she seems to be unable to limit giving the same type of information when online. You don't like the fact that she's constantly posting images of you on her account with so many people following whom you don't know. You also know that she has had some people troll her accounts and post bullying messages to her, but she doesn't want to block them or report them because she's fearful of losing her online friends.

**Online Case Study / Scenario 1: Answers to the worksheet questions** (italicized, in the bullets below)

1. What's problematic about this scenario?
  - *Emily is oversharing about her life and creating vulnerable situations for herself and others.*
  - *Emily is ignoring other people's requests regarding information security that affects their own accounts.*
  - *Emily is experiencing cyberbullying.*
  - *Emily is refusing to address any corrective action with the cyberbullying*

2. What is causing or increasing vulnerability? What's the issue (or, issues) with what Emily is doing?
  - *Sharing posts with a lot of personal information, including emotions, life changes, photos, etc., could be dangerous, because someone with bad intentions could use the information to find you—even with information as brief as knowing your school name or your sports team.*
  - *Tagging people who don't have privacy settings on their own accounts can leave other accounts vulnerable.*
  - *There is no way to completely safeguard material online unless you don't post it, because it can be screenshot, saved or shared by people you know—and by people you don't.*
  - *Posts with personal feelings and life changes could be problematic if read by the wrong people who are looking to target people who might be vulnerable.*
  - *Posts can often have identifying information in the background, through clothing, signage, etc. All photos should be carefully screened to ensure that you're not giving away sensitive or private information that will leave you and people around you vulnerable.*
  - *Another problem is that she doesn't really know who is trolling her online—it could literally be anyone, and they could know practically everything about her because of what she is sharing.*
    - *Emily shouldn't be afraid of shutting down her account just because she fears a "dip" in her popularity. Teens who "live" online can experience serious emotional problems. She should be encouraged to get involved in activities in school or the community that don't require the Internet.*
    - *What Emily shares about herself online, even if she attempts to "delete" it, will stay on the Internet forever. Nothing can completely disappear from the Internet, and anything posted can be saved by other individuals as well. This doesn't just affect Emily, it affects everyone that she posts about.*
3. Is this a safe situation? What could go wrong?
  - *Lots of things could go wrong here—primarily because Emily has posted a lot of personal and identifying information, from cyberbullying, exploitation.*
4. Should you keep this information a secret? Why / why not? Can you do anything to help?
  - *No, we don't keep unsafe secrets. The material that is being posted doesn't just affect Emily, it affects everyone who is affiliated with her account and the specific posts. This makes it unsafe for her and others.*
  - *You can offer to go with her to talk to a safe adult or talk to the safe adult on her behalf.*
5. What should be done now?
  - *She needs to report the troll(s) to the appropriate administration within the app or site, communicate with safe adults, and consider shutting down or removing her account depending on what has been said and/or threatened.*
  - *Contacting the police or the FBI is important when suspecting online victimization, because it could lead to the identification of someone with bad intentions, and will stop the contact between that victim and the abuser, and countless other people who might have been victimized in the future.*

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**Online Case Study / Scenario 2:** Jose is into gaming. He's really good at it and has lots of different accounts online with alias names. Gaming is a way for him to relax with a tough school load. His alias names are usually very similar, and typically involve some variation of his name and interests. He also uses the same password for everything to make it easier to quickly access his accounts. He has an online friend whom he games with often, and they talk frequently through the gaming apps. The friend says that he's the same age as Jose and has shown Jose pictures of himself and a girlfriend. The online friend has started to share personal information, like issues that are happening with his parents, and girlfriend, etc. Jose is beginning to feel safe with telling him personal and private information, too. They ended up sharing phone numbers so they could message even when they weren't gaming. In a new game, Jose's friend offered to help him win a level, but Jose would need to give him the password for the account. Jose knows his friend is the better gamer and really wants to win. He doesn't know if he should share his password or not.

**Online Case Study / Scenario 2: Answers to the worksheet questions**

1. What's problematic about this scenario?
  - *Jose has user names that give away identifying information.*
  - *Jose also uses the same password for all of his accounts.*
  - *Jose is sharing personal information with someone he doesn't actually know over the Internet.*
2. What information about the "friend" in this scenario can you absolutely, 100% know to be true?
  - *Nothing, except the person's chosen username and their skillset at playing the game.*
3. What could happen? What is causing or increasing vulnerability? What's the issue (or, issues) with what Jose is doing?
  - *When someone has your username and password, they can do all sorts of inappropriate online behavior that would be attached to you, even if you weren't the one who actually performed the behavior.*
  - *The person could post information from your account that could get you into serious trouble with your parents, with school, other people and potentially even the law.*

- *Providing passwords could also cause potential hacking issues, a big issue from an information security perspective.*
- *In addition, if you have passwords that are the same across different applications and sites, this could endanger you from a financial perspective.*

4. What should he do now and moving forward?

- *He should be able to go in and update his usernames; contacting the app/gaming administrators for assistance should be useful, too. It's important that we never create user names that can link to your real name and interests, because it can give identifying information about you (such as your name, age, location, school, interests) to others.*
- *Moving forward for any new accounts: the usernames should also be carefully constructed from an information security perspective. A combination of numbers and letters tends to work better to reduce vulnerability.*
- *He should go through and systematically update all of his passwords, so they are different and unique from each other. Even if it makes things easier, there's too much risk—we should also never use the same password for multiple accounts.*
- *He should make it clear to his online friend that he won't be sharing his password, but thanks anyway.*
- *Jose should examine his strategy for unwinding each day. Is his gaming becoming addictive? What are other healthy ways to relax after a hard day?*

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**Online Case Study / Scenario 3:** Mackenzie began to spend more time online after a family member died. Through her social media accounts and pages that she visited to learn more about grief, she started talking with a new friend, John, who said he was “just a couple of years older.” John said he also was also going through a death in the family when Mackenzie opened up, and had lots of good advice about how to cope. Mackenzie felt like she didn't know what she would have done without John's help and support, and truly felt like she had found someone who understood her and supported her better than her own family. Mackenzie and John started to call each other boyfriend and girlfriend and have said they love each other, even though they have never met. Mackenzie told you that the only thing that bothered her is that John would become very upset when Mackenzie didn't answer his texts right away. And, he also got jealous when she hung out with friends—but then she said, “oh that's normal, all guys do that!” Mackenzie quickly deletes the messages from John in case her mom looks on her phone, because she told you her mom “wouldn't understand her feelings.” And, she hides her phone from you, too, when John texts. John now wants Mackenzie to sneak out and meet him at his house for some “fun”. Mackenzie wants him to know how she really feels and has agreed to meet up with him at his house for the first time by herself.

**Online Case Study / Scenario 3: Answers to the worksheet questions**

1. What's problematic about this scenario? Is this a safe situation?

- *Mackenzie is grieving and needs support.*
- *Mackenzie assumes her online friend, John, is who she thinks he is.*
- *Mackenzie is alienating herself from her family and friends.*
- *Mackenzie is putting herself at great risk by meeting John in person and alone, without anyone else knowing what she is doing or where she is going.*

2. What is causing or increasing vulnerability? What's the issue (or, issues) with what Mackenzie is doing? What *could* go wrong?

- *Mackenzie is at a vulnerable time in her life because of her grief. Learning more about grief through the Internet can be healthy, but revealing too much information online to a stranger is dangerous.*
- *John may not be who he says he is. His emotional support and advice could be part of a grooming process.*
- *John's jealousy and controlling behavior is unhealthy and indicates grooming.*
- *Mackenzie's desire to hide from her mother and friends is unhealthy and further puts her into a dangerous situation. Becoming secretive about online behavior and withdrawing from family and friends is a sign that a teen may be in contact with an online predator.*
- *If Mackenzie meets with John by herself, she can become a victim of sexual assault, kidnapping or further exploitation.*

3. What information about the “John” in this scenario can you absolutely, 100% know to be true?

- *John is the name that someone is using to identify themselves over the Internet.*

4. Should you keep this information a secret? Why / why not? Can you do anything to help? Should you intervene? How?

- *It is never ok to keep a secret when someone is at risk of being harmed or harming themselves. A true friend would step in and get Mackenzie the help she needs.*

5. What should be done now?

- *You should go with Mackenzie and talk to a safe adult.*
- *If Mackenzie will not go with you to talk to a safe adult, then you should tell a safe adult about what Mackenzie is experiencing.*

- *The police or FBI may need to be informed if additional details come out that show Mackenzie is at even greater risk for exploitation, or if she has been exploited or sexually abused.*

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**Online Case Study / Scenario 4:** Olivia sent Casey a naked picture of herself. She asked Casey to keep it a secret, but his friends convinced him to text the image to them. His friends then ended up sending the image to others, too. One of the guys who received the photo was from a different school in another city. He searched for Olivia on the Internet, found her on social media and told her that if she didn't send him more naked photos, he would distribute the one he has all over the Internet and to everyone at the school. The girl didn't know what to do, so she eventually sent him more, and found out that he put them on his blog. He then told her she had to send him videos, too, or he would send her photo to a pornography site for millions of people to see and ruin her reputation completely. Olivia thought briefly about calling the police but didn't feel like it would make a difference—especially because she was the one who sent the first naked photo. Plus, it seems easier to deal with the shame and embarrassment rather than getting into trouble with her parents and the police. She asked herself, "what could the cops really do to help anyway?" Even so, she doesn't know what to do and is becoming depressed and feeling completely alone. She's considering sending the videos and "being done with it."

#### **Online Case Study / Scenario 4: Answers to the worksheet questions**

1. What's problematic about this scenario?
  - *Olivia sent a naked image of herself over the Internet.*
  - *Every time that the image is shared with someone else, it is sexually exploiting Olivia.*
  - *Pictures that are posted online or sent via message could be redistributed very quickly. Even photos that are deleted or supposedly "disappear" can easily be saved and then distributed.*
  - *Olivia is being sexually exploited and blackmailed over the Internet (i.e. messaging).*
2. What is causing or increasing vulnerability? What's the issue (or, issues) with what either Olivia or Casey are doing?
  - *Photos of naked bodies or private body parts should never be shared online.*
  - *Olivia is not looking for or obtaining help from safe adults, and is letting fear dictate her decisions.*
  - *Olivia's withdrawal from family and friends is unhealthy, and making the situation more isolating and dangerous for her.*
  - *Once something is shared online, we cannot always control it. Think of how quickly a YouTube video or meme can get a million views around the world.*
  - *Olivia continues to produce material that could be considered child pornography, since she is underage and distributing it over the Internet. However, and more importantly, she is naively believing that if she continues to supply the cyberbully with material, he will eventually stop—and this is not true. Even if he \*were\* to stop, her materials are still out on the Internet being viewed by others.*
3. Is this a safe situation? What could go wrong?
  - *Once something is shared online, we cannot always control it. Think of how quickly a YouTube video or meme can get a million views around the world.*
  - *Olivia is the victim of a Cyberbully. The situation could escalate with more exploitative demands being made of her.*
  - *Olivia is already showing signs withdrawal and depression. The repercussions of this exploitation could lead to suicide.*
  - *The Cyberbully may have other victims and he should be stopped.*
4. If you had received the image, what should have happened?
  - *You should immediately tell a safe adult and the police or CyberTipline. Under no circumstances, should it have been shared or shown to other peers. And, if it had been shown, you should have done the right thing and stopped the distribution from continuing, before then speaking to a safe adult. Olivia placed herself in a very vulnerable situation, and an adult needs to be aware of this so that they can help her.*
5. Should you keep this information a secret? Why / why not? Can you do anything to help? Should you intervene? How?
  - *It is never ok to keep a secret when someone is at risk of being harmed or harming themselves. A true friend would step in and get Olivia the help she needs.*
  - *Help her to know that she isn't dealing with this by herself.*
  - *Encourage her to get help and let her know you're willing to go with her to someone safe. If she isn't willing to get help on her own or with you, get help for her on your own by talking to a safe adult or reporting it directly to the police or the CyberTipline.*
6. What should be done now?
  - *Olivia needs to speak out to a safe adult and tell them what has happened.*
  - *Along with the safe adult, she should communicate with the CyberTipline and explain what has happened with the online image(s); the info is <https://report.cybertip.org>*
  - *The National Center for Missing and Exploited Youth will review the material and help make additional information available for the appropriate law enforcement agency.*

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**Online Case Study / Scenario 5:** Your friend, Jimmy, recently told you that he's been talking to an older woman online who reached out to one of his social media accounts. He said they flirt and talk about sex a lot. According to Jimmy, she's out of college, a teacher, really nice and fun, and "understands" him, so the fact that she's an adult and at least 10 years older than Jimmy isn't a big deal. Jimmy feels proud of himself to be in a relationship with an older woman and has asked you to cover for him with his parents before, so they think that he's going to be at your house when he's actually spending time with her. She told him that he could only tell you, as long as you kept the information secret and confidential. You don't really know how far they've gone together, but you suspect that they are pretty serious and that sexual behavior has occurred. Regardless of whether it's a male or female, you know that it's weird for an older person to be dating a teen, but she seems to be treating Jimmy really well, and gives him gifts, too.

**Online Case Study / Scenario 5: Answers to the worksheet questions**

1. What's problematic about this scenario?
  - *Jimmy cannot be sure that he is really talking to an older woman, even if she shared photos of herself.*
  - *It is not ok for adults to flirt and talk about sex with a teen.*
  - *Covering for Jimmy is putting yourself at risk for trouble.*
2. What is causing or increasing vulnerability? What's the issue (or, issues) with what Jimmy is doing?
  - *The person Jimmy is talking to is exhibiting grooming behaviors: talking about sex, giving gifts, demanding secrecy, meeting alone, etc.*
  - *Jimmy is further putting himself at risk by withdrawing from his family and friends.*
3. What information about the "woman" in this scenario can you absolutely, 100% know to be true?
  - *Regardless of how fun and kind she seems, she is performing illegal activity by dating and potentially having sex with a teen. Her behavior amounts to sexual abuse, regardless of how "cool" Jimmy feels she is.*
4. Is this a safe situation? What could go wrong?
  - *By meeting with this person alone, Jimmy is at risk for exploitation, sexual assault or kidnapping—if he has not already been sexually abused by the female.*
  - *The woman could be sexually abusing or exploiting other people, as well.*
5. Should you keep this information a secret? Why or why not? Can you do anything to help? Should you intervene? How?
  - *When a friend is at risk of being harmed or harming himself, you must talk to a safe adult about the situation.*
6. What should be done now?
  - *Do not cover for Jimmy by lying about his whereabouts.*
  - *Encourage Jimmy to talk to a safe adult about this relationship, and report to the police or CyberTipline.*
  - *If Jimmy will not talk to anyone about the relationship, you should talk to a safe adult and report to the police or CyberTipline.*

**End the lesson with a prayer**

The Lesson Leader may invite the youth to create their own prayer, he / she may lead a prayer, or may use the suggested prayer below.

*Dear God,*

*Sometimes things happen to me that are confusing or frightening. When I feel stuck, alone or don't know where to turn, help me remember that I have many adults who care about me and want the best for me. Help me remember to uphold my boundaries so I can protect myself from anyone who might want to hurt me—even if it is someone I like, and help me to protect my friends as well*

**ACTIVITY OPTION #3: What, Why, Next—Safe Surprises, Unsafe Secrets & Privacy**

**Instructions:** Read each question and circle / highlight the correct response from the columns on the right, then answer “why” and “what next?”. Some examples may have several responses to identify. After, you’ll discuss the answers with your entire large group.

**Unsafe Secret or Safe Surprise: What, Why, Next?**

1. **a. Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if someone tells you about a prank they are planning on doing to someone that you realize could hurt the person, but you're also told not to tell anyone?

Unsafe  
Secret

Safe  
Surprise

1b. Why?

1c. What next?

2. **a. Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if you're spending time with your friend and notice he has bruises all over his arms and legs? Your friend told you that his dad gets really angry sometimes and that's “just what happens—if you're really my friend, you'll promise me you won't tell anyone about it!” You promise not to say anything, but now you're second guessing your decision.

Unsafe  
Secret

Safe  
Surprise

2b. Why?

2c. What next?

3. **a. Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if one of your parents wants to have a special dinner because a family member had a big accomplishment? What if you just want to tell the person that you're planning something, without telling them WHAT you're planning?

Unsafe  
Secret

Safe  
Surprise

3b. Why?

3c. What next?

4. **a. Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if your teacher tells you she has a surprise for you, and gives you a surprise gift, but says, “maybe one day we can tell others, but let's keep it our little secret for now”? You really like the gift and want to keep it. And, you know that your parents wouldn't be able to afford it. Plus, it makes you feel special that your teacher cares enough about you to get you a present. But, it's confusing that she called it a surprise when she also said you couldn't talk about it yet. *(cont. on next page)*

Unsafe  
Secret

Safe  
Surprise

## ACTIVITY OPTION #3: What, Why, Next—Safe Surprises, Unsafe Secrets &amp; Privacy (cont.)

4b. Why?

4c. What next?

5. a. **Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if your parents tell you that they're going to have a baby, and that you're going to have a little sibling, and ask that you don't tell anyone until they're ready to share the information publicly? They also tell you that even when they start to talk about it, they don't want you to ever post pictures of the new baby on social media.

Unsafe  
Secret

Safe  
Surprise

5b. Why?

5c. What next?

6. a. **Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if your cousin tells you an uncle you both know has been touching her inappropriately for the past year and has made her look at pornography online, but wants you to keep it private and not tell anyone? The uncle is a police officer, and is well known and respected in the community. She begs you not to say anything to anyone else. She specifically said, "look, it's over now, I'm over it, and nothing can be done because no one is going to believe me over a police officer! Plus, everybody likes him! Our parents will be really upset, will probably say I did something wrong or they'll say I'm lying, and I don't want to deal with that."

Unsafe  
Secret

Safe  
Surprise

6b. Why?

6c. What next?

7. a. **Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if an older teen pulls up a girl's dress at school, takes a picture so others can see her underwear and bra underneath, and then messages it to others? Several of your classmates know about it, and have made fun of her, but no one wants to tell on him. You also know that the girl has been very upset, and has been skipping school because of it.

Unsafe  
Secret

Safe  
Surprise

7b. Why?

7c. What next?

8. a. **Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if you're in what you consider to be a loving relationship, but the other person doesn't seem to care when you say "no" when it comes to your body—and you don't want anyone else to know? Most of the relationship is awesome, but there are a lot of times where you're hurt and sad, and you feel like your boundaries aren't respected. You don't know if it's a big enough deal to talk *(cont. on next page)*

Unsafe  
Secret

Safe  
Surprise

**ACTIVITY OPTION #3: What, Why, Next—Safe Surprises, Unsafe Secrets & Privacy (cont.)**

to anyone about, because you've been told that all relationships have ups and downs. Plus—you don't want people to judge your boyfriend/girlfriend and say bad things about them, since they don't know the person like you do.

**8b. Why?**

**8c. What next?**

- 9. a. Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if your coach asks you questions about your private parts, including what they look like? The coach is known as a “cool” person, and seems to never really care about the rules. You don't really want to discuss your private parts with your coach, but feel stuck because you don't want your spot on the team to be jeopardized. You answered the coach's question, but you don't know if you should say anything about the encounter or just keep it quiet.

**Unsafe  
Secret**

**Safe  
Surprise**

**9b. Why?**

**9c. What next?**

- 10. a. Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if your friend tells you that they have a crush on a friend and asks you not to say anything to anyone?

**Unsafe  
Secret**

**Safe  
Surprise**

**10b. Why?**

**10c. What next?**

- 11. a. Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if your dad's best friend comes over and asks you to hand him his phone that clearly displays pornography, and then asks if he can touch you in your private parts just like in the video? He told you that the things they do in the video are fun, and that you should let him you because it will be educational and important for you to learn! When you refuse, he said that your dad will believe him over you, and that you “don't want to know what will happen to you when you tell.” Now you're scared to say anything. You used to think he was one of your safe adults, and now you don't know who to trust, and definitely don't want to tell your dad because it's his best friend. Maybe everyone is better off not knowing?

**Unsafe  
Secret**

**Safe  
Surprise**

**11b. Why?**

**11c. What next?**



**ACTIVITY OPTION #3: What, Why, Next—Safe Surprises, Unsafe Secrets & Privacy (cont.)**

**12.a. Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if Jordan sneaks out of the house at night to go out with friends and has a horrible situation occur to her, but doesn't want to tell anyone? During the outing, Jordan starts drinking, and is cornered by someone she knows when no one else is around. Jordan tried to get away and said "no", but the person didn't listen and violated her in a serious way and forced her to do things she didn't want to do. During the encounter, Jordan is horrified and upset, but is also scared that her body may have experienced pleasure, even though she was extremely upset and uncomfortable throughout the entire, awful experience. She doesn't know what to do. She can't tell her parents because she knows she will get in trouble with them—and she already feels awful enough. And, she feels like the whole experience was her fault anyway because she snuck out and started drinking, two things she knows she wasn't supposed to do. Jordan asks herself, "since it's my problem, isn't it easier to keep it quiet and try to deal with it on my own?" She doesn't even know where to start and is feeling exhausted with trying to hide it all and pretend that everything is OK.

Unsafe  
Secret

Safe  
Surprise

**12b. Why?**

**12c. What next?**

**13.a. Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if the adult leader of your school club pulls you aside and asks if you're going to be at school next Monday because you're going to win an award—but not to tell anyone else at school about it?

Unsafe  
Secret

Safe  
Surprise

**13b. Why?**

**13c. What next?**

**14.a. Is it an unsafe secret or safe surprise...** if Joseph was sexually abused by a man at his church, and turned to drugs and can't stop? Joseph always used to receive special privileges from the man, and enjoyed the attention—until the man started behaving inappropriately with him. Joseph didn't realize that the man was taking advantage of him at first, but over time, it became abundantly clear. Joseph worries that people will be able to suspect that he was abused by a man, and worries what people will think and say about Joseph as a result. He can't stop with the drugs because it's the only way he feels better, but he's terrified that people will figure out his two major secrets.

Unsafe  
Secret

Safe  
Surprise

**14b. Why?**

**14c. What next?**

**Lesson 4 for Grades 9—12** Secrets, Surprises and Promises

**ACTIVITY OPTION #4: Boundary Rules and Safety—Secret cryptogram**

**Instructions:** A cryptogram is an encrypted, “secret” phrase that you have to figure out. At the top, you’ll see a key with all of the letters from A to Z. Each of the letters in the key has a corresponding number to the secret phrase. You’ll determine the correct matches through the process of elimination. Fill in the letters that correspond to the numbers below to solve the secret phrase. For an added element of difficulty, try to solve the phrase without reading the hint at the bottom; you may want to fold your sheet so that you don’t accidentally view the hint.

**SECRET CRYPTOGRAM #1:**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

6 24 20 10 15 24 20 10 20 10 25 24 10 2 3 22 10 22 8 20 10 25

23 22 6 17 22 10 17 23 16 8 20 9 24 12 14 2 22 17 23 10 22 15

8 17 23 1 19 15 20 10 3 1 8 15 20 10 25 15 3 17 6 22 8

15 3 17 20 8 23 24 13 17 15 14

**Hint:**

Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A				

ACTIVITY OPTION #4: Boundary Rules and Safety—Secret cryptogram (cont.)

**SECRET CRYPTOGRAM #2:**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

4 18      3 14 11 20 14 5 20      3      19 14 25 5 8 9 24 4 20 3

2 9 10 20      19 20 20 5      10 4 14 15 9 26 20 8

3 14 11 20 14 5 20      4 3      2 25 24 26      14 24      2 9 3

13 14 26 20 5 26 4 9 15      26 14      19 20      2 25 24 26      17 20

11 25 3 26      26 20 15 15      3 14 11 20 14 5 20      26 14      2 20 15 13

26 2 20 11      9 5 8      16 20 20 13      26 2 20 11      3 9 18 20

Hint:

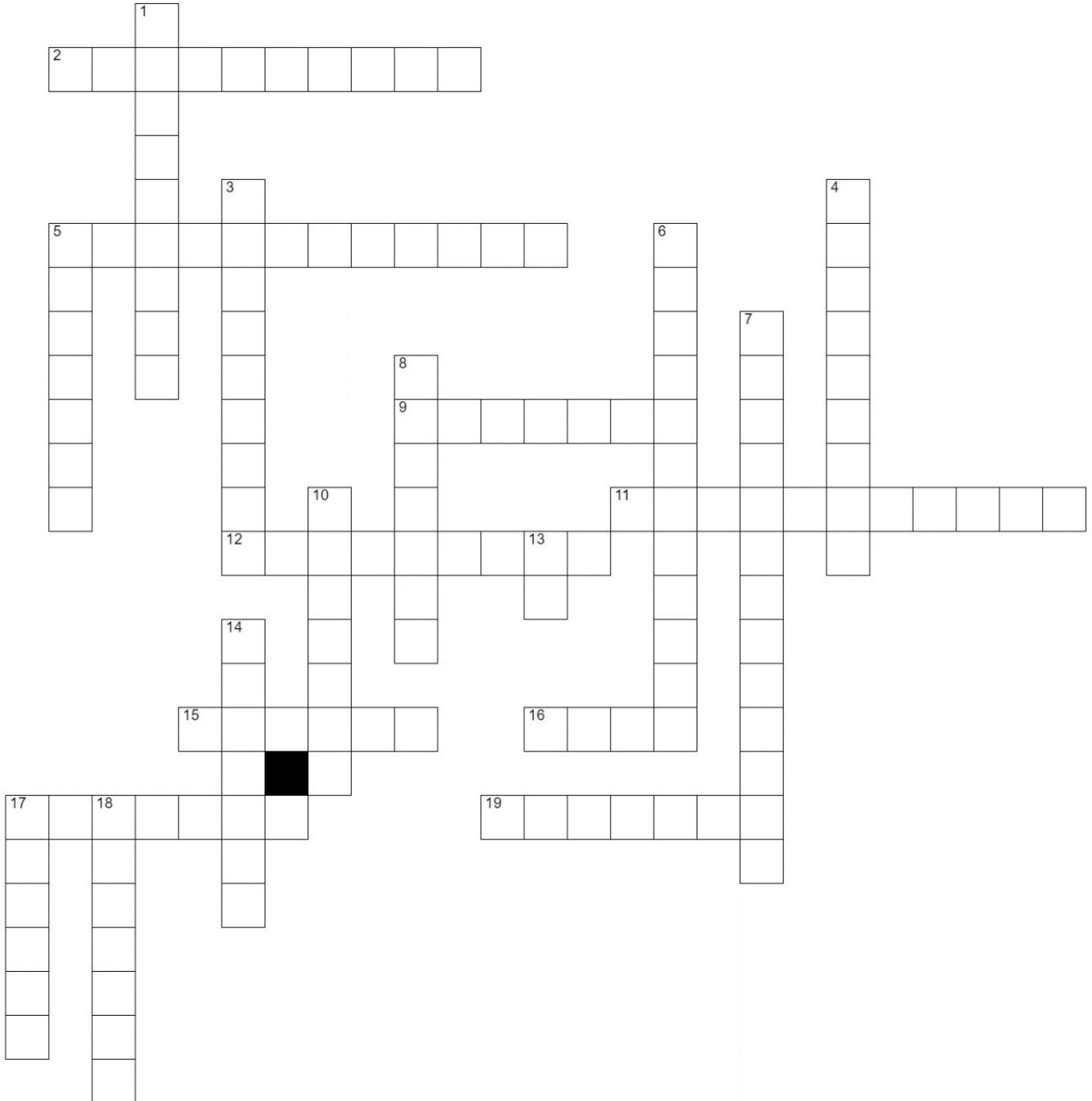
Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A

Lesson 4 for Grades 9—12

Secrets, Surprises and Promises

**ACTIVITY OPTION #5: Relationships, Secrets and Surprises—Crossword**

**Instructions:** Complete the following crossword puzzle by determining the answers to the fill-in-the-blank clues and inserting them in the boxes provided. There are no spaces between letters or words in two-word phrases (i.e., "SAY NO" would appear as "SAYNO"). Some letters may be used by two words.



**ACTIVITY OPTION #5: Relationships, Secrets and Surprises—Crossword (cont.)****DOWN:**

1. Safe \_\_\_\_\_ are fun, temporary, meant to be shared and usually make people happy.
3. It's never too late to talk to a \_\_\_\_\_ about something that is bothering me.
4. It's extremely \_\_\_\_\_ that when you have a choice, to respect yourself enough to not give someone a part of yourself just so that they will like you.
5. It IS OK to break a \_\_\_\_\_ when it comes to the safety rules.
6. You deserve respect and have a right to be safe—and feel safe, especially in the context of a \_\_\_\_\_.
7. When I feel \_\_\_\_\_ about something, I need to talk to a safe adult.
8. When it comes to a situation where boundaries have been violated, someone is hurt or has the potential to be hurt, we should keep the information \_\_\_\_\_ insofar as we only tell the people who need to know to help us (and them) stay safe—such as our safe adults or other people who can help us.
10. When people ask us to keep unsafe secrets, it's a \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Saying \_\_\_\_\_ is a powerful boundary, and should be honored, especially when it comes to your body and personal boundaries.
14. A sign of a person with \_\_\_\_\_ boundaries is when you uphold your personal values despite what other people want, or ask of you.
17. Keeping \_\_\_\_\_ about an unsafe secret only protects the person who is causing the harm, which allows them to keep on doing what they want to that person, and maybe others.
18. Revealing about unsafe secrets is the best way to get help and start relieving the stress. It takes \_\_\_\_\_ to speak up about unsafe secrets.

**ACROSS:**

2. When you walk on eggshells, justify the other person's behavior or you go along with what they want because it's easier—these are all signs of unhealthy \_\_\_\_\_ that you're exhibiting.
5. Safe adults should never ask you questions about what your \_\_\_\_\_ look like, unless you've disclosed discomfort or pain, or it's someone like a parent or doctor who's helping to ensure that you're safe and healthy.
9. Safe people \_\_\_\_\_ your boundaries, and don't violate the safety rules.
11. You always need to \_\_\_\_\_ scary problems or unsafe secrets to a safe adult.
12. There are certain things about unhealthy relationships that would automatically make them a problem—such as if the other person \_\_\_\_\_ you (either to harm you, someone else, or even themselves, if you don't do something they want).
15. It's not OK to keep a secret about \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Even if it feels like you have a really big problem, there's nothing that is so big that you can't get \_\_\_\_\_.
17. Unsafe \_\_\_\_\_ can be harmful, and can hurt others.
19. Be wary when someone gets jealous of your interactions with others, or tries to \_\_\_\_\_ you or alienate you from others.

**ACTIVITY OPTION #6: Secrets, Grooming and Online Case Studies**

**Instructions:** Please read the following scenarios and answer the questions. You will have time near the end to discuss the answers with the entire group. Use extra paper as necessary.

**Online Case Study / Scenario 1:** Emily is friends with a lot of people online. She's constantly posting to try and get more friends added to her social media accounts and loves it when people "like" her posts or comment on them—even if she doesn't know them. She's assured her family that she never posts any super personal information, but as her friend, you've noticed that her posts are becoming less guarded, and she's sharing a lot about her life and feelings regarding specific big life changes that have been occurring at home. She's also posting images that identify who she is, where she lives and where she hangs out. For example, she's posting pictures and videos that she has taken in front of your school, with the school mascot and in front of her home and tagged people who don't have any privacy settings on their accounts. When you talked to her about it and warned her to stop "oversharing," she became very defensive and told you that it's none of your business, and to keep your thoughts to yourself and no one else. It's ironic because you were recently together at the mall and had someone approach you and ask personal questions and Emily quickly shut down the conversation and moved on, yet she seems to be unable to limit giving the same type of information when online. You don't like the fact that she's constantly posting images of you on her account with so many people following whom you don't know. You also know that she has had some people troll her accounts and post bullying messages to her, but she doesn't want to block them or report them because she's fearful of losing her online friends.

**Questions for Scenario 1:**

1. What's problematic about this scenario?
2. What is causing or increasing vulnerability? What's the issue (or, what are the issues) with what Emily is doing?
3. Is this a safe situation? What *could* go wrong?
4. Should you keep this information a secret? Why / why not? Can you do anything to help?
5. What should be done now?

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**Online Case Study / Scenario 2:** Jose is into gaming. He's really good at it and has lots of different accounts online with alias names. Gaming is a way for him to relax with a tough school load. His alias names are usually very similar, and typically involve some variation of his name and interests. He also uses the same password for everything to make it easier to quickly access his accounts. He has an online friend whom he games with often, and they talk frequently through the gaming apps. The friend says that he's the same age as Jose and has shown Jose pictures of himself and a girlfriend. The online friend has started to share personal information, like issues that are happening with his parents, and girlfriend, etc. Jose is beginning to feel safe with telling him personal and private information, too. They ended up sharing phone numbers so they could message even when they weren't gaming. In a new game, Jose's friend offered to help him win a level, but Jose would need to give him the password for the account. Jose knows his friend is the better gamer and really wants to win. He doesn't know if he should share his password or not.

**Questions for Scenario 2:**

1. What's problematic about this scenario?
2. What information about the "friend" in this scenario can you absolutely, 100% know to be true?
3. What could happen? What is causing or increasing vulnerability? What's the issue (or, what are the issues) with what Jose is doing?
4. What should he do now and moving forward?

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**ACTIVITY OPTION #6: Secrets, Grooming and Online Case Studies (cont.)**

**Online Case Study / Scenario 3:** Mackenzie began to spend more time online after a family member died. Through her social media accounts and pages that she visited to learn more about grief, she started talking with a new friend, John, who said he was “just a couple of years older.” John said he also was also going through a death in the family when Mackenzie opened up, and had lots of good advice about how to cope. Mackenzie felt like she didn’t know what she would have done without John’s help and support, and truly felt like she had found someone who understood her and supported her better than her own family. Mackenzie and John started to call each other boyfriend and girlfriend and have said they love each other, even though they have never met. Mackenzie told you that the only thing that bothered her is that John would become very upset when Mackenzie didn’t answer his texts right away. And, he also got jealous when she hung out with friends—but then she said, “oh that’s normal, all guys do that!” Mackenzie quickly deletes the messages from John in case her mom looks on her phone, because she told you her mom “wouldn’t understand her feelings.” And, she hides her phone from you, too, when John texts. John now wants Mackenzie to sneak out and meet him at his house for some “fun”. Mackenzie wants him to know how she really feels and has agreed to meet up with him at his house for the first time by herself.

**Questions for Scenario 3:**

1. What’s problematic about this scenario? Is this a safe situation?
2. What is causing or increasing vulnerability? What’s the issue (or, issues) with what Mackenzie is doing? What *could* go wrong?
3. What information about the “John” in this scenario can you absolutely, 100% know to be true?
4. Should you keep this information a secret? Why / why not? Can you do anything to help? Should you intervene? How?
5. What should be done now?

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**Online Case Study / Scenario 4:** Olivia sent Casey a naked picture of herself. She asked Casey to keep it a secret, but his friends convinced him to text the image to them. His friends then ended up sending the image to others, too. One of the guys who received the photo was from a different school in another city. He searched for Olivia on the Internet, found her on social media and told her that if she didn’t send him more naked photos, he would distribute the one he has all over the Internet and to everyone at the school. The girl didn’t know what to do, so she eventually sent him more, and found out that he put them on his blog. He then told her she had to send him videos, too, or he would send her photo to a pornography site for millions of people to see and ruin her reputation completely. Olivia thought briefly about calling the police but didn’t feel like it would make a difference—especially because she was the one who sent the first naked photo. Plus, it seems easier to deal with the shame and embarrassment rather than getting into trouble with her parents and the police. She asked herself, “what could the cops really do to help anyway?” Even so, she doesn’t know what to do and is becoming depressed and feeling completely alone. She’s considering sending the videos and “being done with it.”

**Questions for Scenario 4:**

1. What’s problematic about this scenario?
2. What is causing or increasing vulnerability? What’s the issue (or, issues) with what either Olivia or Casey are doing?
3. Is this a safe situation? What *could* go wrong?
4. If you had received the image, what should have happened?
5. Should you keep this information a secret? Why / why not? Can you do anything to help? Should you intervene? How?
6. What should be done now?

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**Online Case Study / Scenario 5:** Your friend, Jimmy, recently told you that he’s been talking to an older woman online who reached out to one of his social media accounts. He said they flirt and talk about sex a lot. According to Jimmy, she’s out of college, a teacher, really nice and fun, and “understands” him, so the fact that she’s an adult and at least 10 years older than Jimmy isn’t a big deal. Jimmy feels proud of himself to be in a relationship with an older woman and has asked you to cover for him with his parents before, so they think that he’s going to be at your house when he’s actually spending time with her. She told him that he could only tell you, as long as you kept the information secret and confidential. You don’t really know how far they’ve gone together, but you suspect that they are pretty serious and that sexual behavior has occurred. Regardless of whether it’s a male or female, you know that it’s weird for an older person to be dating a teen, but she seems to be treating Jimmy really well, and gives him gifts, too.

**Questions for Scenario 5:**

1. What’s problematic about this scenario?
2. What is causing or increasing vulnerability? What’s the issue (or, issues) with what Jimmy is doing?
3. Is this a safe situation? What *could* go wrong?
4. Should you keep this information a secret? Why / why not? Can you do anything to help? Should you intervene? How?
5. What should be done now?