Coercion and Recruitment - What You Need to Know

Lesson Plan

Resource: H&PE Elementary Resources   **Unit:**   Internet Safety

Grade(s):   8   **Lesson:**   1 of 3

H&PE Curriculum Expectations

2019 H&PE Curriculum Expectations: A1.2, A1.6, D2.2

Materials

- Access to a shared document (chart paper and markers or online interactive tool)

- Exit cards with sentence stems (*consult the Consolidation section*)

- **Teacher Resource: Anecdotal Recording Chart**

Learning Goals

We are learning how to assess the potential dangers when using technology and strategies to avoid potentially dangerous situations.

Overall Assessment

Using the Teacher Resource: Anecdotal Recording Chart, observe and note students' ability to assess the potential dangers when using technology and strategies to avoid potentially dangerous situations.

Minds-On

Share the learning goals with the class and co-construct success criteria with students. Consider posting the success criteria in the learning space for reference throughout the lesson.

Post the following questions for students to reference:

1. What do you like about the technology you choose to access? What is interesting and/or challenges you?
2. How does it reflect reality and how does it reflect fantasy?
3. What do you have to be cautious about when using your chosen technology?

Using a Mix and Mingle strategy, the previous questions, and the following teacher prompt, engage students in small group discussions about their current use of technology.

Teacher prompt: "Imagine that I am providing you with a device and one hour of time to engage in any form of media you choose. Think about how you would use it (e.g., gaming, communication with friends on your social networks, watching video, exploring websites). On my signal, begin to walk around the room mixing with classmates. On my second signal, stop and pair up with the person closest to you to discuss the Mix and Mingle questions. You may form a group with 2 other students to make sure everyone has a partner. When you hear my signal, finish your conversation and begin to mix and mingle with classmates to get ready for a second round of conversations."

After all Mix and Mingle rounds are completed, invite students to share some of their ideas with the class.

Action

Explain to students that as they become more independent and their interests change, and as technology evolves, it is important to continue to be aware of how technology impacts their life and the potential dangers of using technology. The focus of this lesson is to learn more about potential dangers in an online environment and strategies to avoid these dangerous situations and/or know what to do when you are in these situations.

Post the words "Coercion" and "Recruitment" for students to reference. Using an Elbow Partner strategy and the following teacher prompts, engage students in a group discussion about coercion and recruitment in an online environment.

- **Teacher prompt**: "What do the words coercion and recruitment mean? What is the difference between being coerced and being recruited? Give an example of each." *Student response*: "Coercion is when someone forces another person to do something they don't want to do. Recruitment is when someone is selected or asked to join a team or a group. The difference is that when someone is recruited, it is voluntary but when someone is being coerced, it isn't voluntary. Sometimes people are persuaded to join one team or group over another, but they still get to choose. That's recruitment. When someone is being forced to do something like send an inappropriate image to avoid being ashamed or embarrassed, that coercion."

- **Teacher prompt**: "Being coerced is clearly a danger to the individual who is being targeted. When can being recruited to join a group become dangerous to themselves and/or the family and friends around them?" *Student response*: "Being recruited to join a gang may be dangerous because it can involve doing things that are illegal like stealing, using alcohol or drugs, and violence against others."[1]

Post the following question prompts for students to reference:

- **Question prompt**: What are some of the ways someone might become a target of coercion or be persuaded to join a gang through technology? *Student responses*:

  - "Someone can accidentally come across content that is sexually explicit or shows real or pretend violence which can then lead to them getting pop up messages or images that are inappropriate and which can include threats."

  - "Someone can accidentally come in contact with an adult who is pretending to be a peer who might persuade them to meet them in real life or coerce them into a relationship."

  - "Gangs use technology to post comments or make videos that express hate or encourage violence toward others because of their race, sex, or gender. Sometimes this can be so persuasive that it might lead someone to believe the comments and join the gang."

  - "Some members of gangs use social media platforms to promote their image, their membership in certain groups and their reputations. Gangs can also use social media to initiate violence and

show it online. When someone is curious and visits their website, it might show that they agree with the opinions posted and motivate them to join the gang."

- **Question prompt**: What actions and/or words can make someone vulnerable to online coercion or to joining gangs? *Student responses*:

  - "When someone doesn't feel they have a lot of support, they may get involved in an online relationship because it makes them feel special, they might be receiving compliments from the person online, and be offered gifts. They can then be pressured to share sexual images or engage in sexual behaviour with the person online. If they don't, it can lead to threats or sexual harassment."[2]

  - "Someone may be more at risk to join a gang for status, or recognition or wanting to belong if they don't feel like they are part of a community. They can also be persuaded by friends who are gang members or gangs in the school or community. Using drugs and alcohol can be a factor too. If they feel unsafe in the school or community, they may feel that they will be protected if they join a gang."[3]

- **Question prompt**: What are some signs that someone might be coerced online or involved in a gang? *Student responses*:

  - "Someone may be involved in coercion online if they are secretive about what they are doing online or who they are talking to. They have money or things they can't explain where they got them from. They get upset after being on their social media or getting a text. They might delete their social media account without an explanation. They might be afraid to go to some places." [4]

  - "Signs that someone may be in a gang can be that some of their followers are associated with gangs, their profile picture might show association with a gang, listens to or shares music that is known to be associated with a gang. They may be more secretive or withdrawn from their friends and family, they start to be absent from school, drop out of activities, change their friend group, or change their appearance."[5]

- **Question prompt**: What are some strategies that individuals can use to keep themselves safe from online dangers such as coercion and being exposed to gangs? *Student responses*:

- "Some strategies to stay safe from online dangers are not accepting friend requests from strangers, don't share any personal information online (e.g. address, phone number, pictures that have your school name or a car license in the background), and being careful when searching online to avoid landing accidentally on sites that contain sexually explicit or violent content. Check your privacy setting to make sure they are secure."

  - "Be aware of the messages that are being communicated in chat rooms and content of games and how it might affect our perception of others. Think about what you are hearing and seeing, and the accuracy of the information being shared. Stay away from social media accounts and websites that spread misinformation or promote violence. Be careful what you download."

- **Question prompt**: What should someone do if they are being coerced or recruited online? *Student responses*:

  - "Someone who is being coerced online should stop communicating with individuals online and block them from accessing their social media accounts. They should deactivate all accounts used to communicate with the individual. They shouldn't respond to the threats. They should speak to a safe adult about what is happening. They may need to contact the police."[6]

  - "Someone who is being recruited to join a gang should stop accessing the accounts of people who might be in gangs or who are using their social media to recruit others. They should stay away from peers or gang members who might try to influence them."

Divide the class into 5 equal groups and provide them with access to a shared document. Have groups summarize what they have learned about coercion and recruitment in an online environment and strategies to avoid these dangers. Tell groups they will have 3-4 minutes to talk about and record what they have learned. Have groups post their documents for other groups to reference.

Using the group summaries, clarify and extend student understanding of coercion and recruitment in an online environment and strategies to avoid these dangers.

Consolidation

Provide students an exit card with the following sentence stems:

- I used to think that…

- Now I think that…

- One question I have…

- One new strategy I can use to avoid these dangerous situations when online is…

Provide students with 5 minutes of talk time with an Elbow Partner to reflect on their learning using the sentence stems to guide their reflection. Have students complete and submit their exit card.

Notes to Teachers

For information on the teaching strategies used in this lesson (i.e., Mix and Mingle, Elbow Partner), consult **Teaching Strategy Descriptions**.

For additional information about dangers of technology and strategies, consult:

- **Childnet**

- **Cybertips.ca**

- **Public Health Agency of Canada - Resources to keep children safe online**

- **Public Safety Canada - Youth gang involvement: What are the risk factors?**

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[1]Adapted from: Public Safety Canada (2017). **Youth Gangs in Canada: A Review of Current Topics and Issues**.

[2]Adapted from: Public Safety Canada (2017). **Youth Gangs in Canada: A Review of Current Topics and Issues**.

[3]Adapted from: Public Safety Canada (2022). **Youth gang involvement: What are the risks factors?**

[4]Adapted from: Internet Matters (2022). **Learn About It**.

[5]Adapted from: Paradigm Treatment (2014). **Warning Signs of Teen Gang Involvement**.

[6]Adapted from: Canadian Centre for Child Protection (2017). **How to Talk to Youth About Sextortion**.