

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP LESSON: CHATting & RED FLAGS

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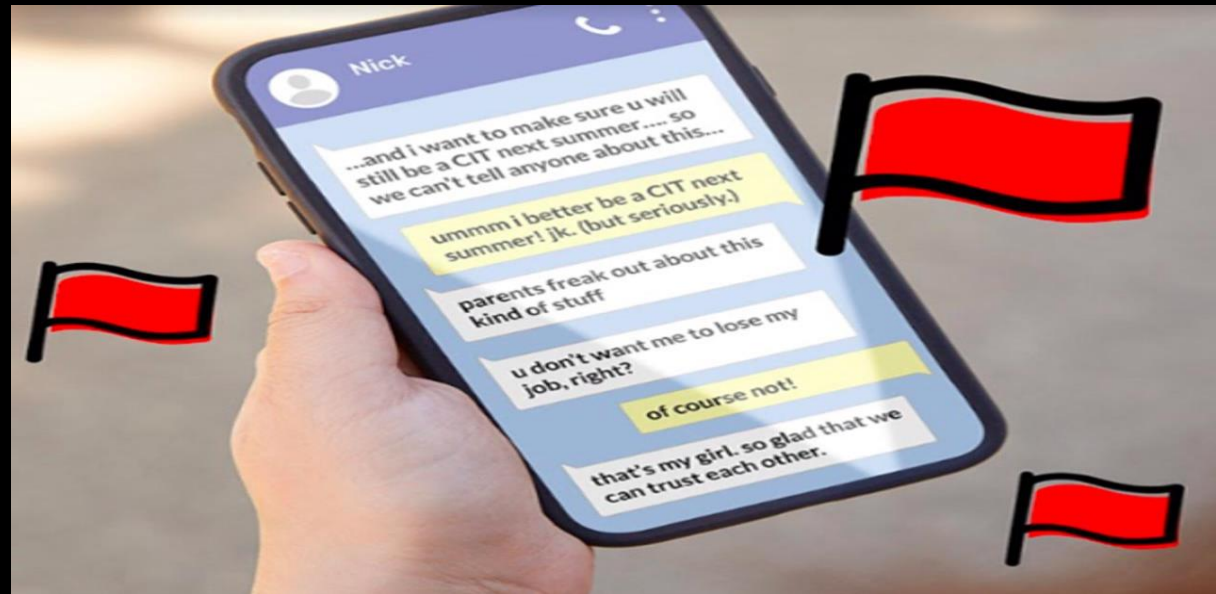
ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can you tell when an online relationship is risky?

Having conversations online, without nonverbal cues or being able to see people, can be awkward and sometimes even risky -- with drawbacks from simple misunderstandings to manipulation or inappropriate messages.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Identify the types of messages that might cause a red flag feeling for someone.
- Use the Feelings & Options thinking routine to analyze and respond to a situation involving a red flag feeling.



VOCABULARY: RED FLAG FEELING

Red Flag Feeling – when something happens that makes you feel uncomfortable, worried, sad, or anxious

Is Your Cyber Sweetheart Swindling You?

Roses are red, violets are blue, and romance scammers can fool you, too. Look for these red flags.



They say they're far away.



Their profile seem too good to be true.



The relationship is moving fast.



They break promises to see you.



They ask for money.



They require specific payment methods.

VOCABULARY: GROOMING (ONLINE)

When someone older uses chatting or messaging to befriend and manipulate a child or teenager for the purpose of sexual abuse or sex trafficking



CHATTING

Chatting with strangers can result in a type of situation that can cause red flag feelings. Sometimes, you might experience red flag feelings when chatting with people who are closer in age and possibly even people you know in real life. For example:

- If someone asks you to do something you're not comfortable with, like sharing a photo of yourself, sharing where you live or go to school, or keeping your relationship secret.
- If someone lies about their age or background, or tries to manipulate you by saying things like "If you really liked me, you would ... " or "No one understands you like I do."



FEELINGS AND OPTIONS

When you have a red flag feeling, it's important to slow down, pause, and think about how you are feeling using the Feelings & Options steps.

- **Identify**. Who are the different people involved in the scenario? What dilemma or challenge are they facing?
- **Feel**. What do you think each person in the dilemma is *feeling*? Why might the situation be hard or challenging for each of them?
- **Imagine**. Imagine *options* for how the situation could be handled. Come up with as many ideas as possible. Then, choose which option might lead to the most positive outcome, where most people feel good or taken care of.
- **Say**. Thinking more about the idea you chose for handling the situation, what could the people involved say? Be as specific as possible.










FEELINGS AND OPTIONS: READ THE SCENARIO

Sheyna just started her freshman year of high school and has recently started exchanging messages with Nick, who is the assistant director at the day camp she attended over the summer. He just graduated from college and lives a few hours away.

Sheyna messages about how much she misses camp and how she's frustrated with her friends. Nick is funny, flirty, and great at giving advice. "Those girls sound so immature," he tells her. "You might as well be in college. Seriously. You act way cooler than any 14-year-old I know."

One day Sheyna and Nick have the following exchange (CIT stands for "counselor in training"):

FEELINGS AND OPTIONS: READ THE SCENARIO

-  **Nick: did you know i thought about you at camp all the time? i like couldn't take my eyes off you**
-  **Sheyna: :) why didn't you say anything!?**
-  **Nick: lol u were a CIT**
-  **Nick: ...and i want to make sure u will still be a CIT next summer.... so we can't tell anyone about this...**
-  **Sheyna: ummm i better be a CIT next summer! jk. (but seriously.)**
-  **Nick: parents freak out about this kind of stuff**
-  **Nick: u don't want me to lose my job, right?**
-  **Sheyna: of course not!**
-  **Nick: that's my girl. so glad that we can trust each other.**

Type a message...

send

FEELINGS AND OPTIONS: READ THE SCENARIO

Nick then asks Sheyna to send him some pictures of her in her bathing suit at camp. Sheyna is flattered, but it makes her feel a little uncomfortable. Nick always talks about how mature she seems. She doesn't want to make him think otherwise.



FEELINGS AND OPTIONS: SHENYA'S SITUATION ACTIVITY

Identify: Who are the different people involved in the scenario? What dilemma or challenge are they facing?

Feel: What do you think Sheyna is feeling? Why might the situation be hard or challenging for her?

FEELINGS AND OPTIONS: SHENYA'S SITUATION ACTIVITY

Imagine: Imagine how Sheyna could handle the situation. Come up with as many ideas as possible: There is no "right" answer! Then, circle which option might lead to the most positive outcome.

Say: Thinking more about the idea you chose for handling the situation, what could Sheyna say?

First, how would she say it?

_____ In Person _____ Call or Face Time _____ Text

_____ Direct/Private Message _____ Email _____ Other

Second: What would she say? Write out the conversation.

FEELINGS AND OPTIONS: SHENYA'S SITUATION ACTIVITY

Divide into groups, discuss each of the scenarios below. Consider how Sheyna might feel and what she should do or say given the additional background information.

What if Sheyna tries to change the subject to avoid sending a picture, but Nick keeps bringing it up?

What if Nick threatens to sabotage Sheyna's chances of becoming a CIT if she doesn't share a picture?

What if Sheyna sends a picture to Nick, and Nick ends up showing it to other people?

What if Sheyna ignores Nick, but Nick keeps finding ways to communicate with Sheyna?



Remember that when you have a red flag feeling, it's important to slow down, pause, and think about how you're feeling. Taking these steps will help you think through the options you have for handling the situation.

