

Survivor Diaries



Overview

Students discuss the positive and negative aspects of using the Internet. They watch “Survivor Diaries” and use Ryan and Noah’s stories to discuss the challenges teens face online. Then students write about their personal experiences.



30 minutes



Materials / Preparation

- Computer lab or computer connected to an LCD projector or television monitor
- Video - “Survivor Diaries”
- Journal, hand-written or typed



Activity

Begin by explaining to students that there are positive and negative aspects of the Internet. Ask teens to quickly brainstorm benefits they receive from using the Internet. Possible responses may include: easy access to information for homework; interesting topics or hobbies such as sports, movie reviews, celebrities, or music; communicating with friends and family; or the ability to purchase things conveniently (with help of an adult).

Next, ask students to identify some negative aspects of the Internet. Possible responses may include: evaluating biased or unreliable sources; hard-to-find

information; Internet connection speed; unwanted communication, such as private messages, spam, or flames; exposure to inappropriate material; people you don’t know trying to get your personal information; or people you don’t know asking to meet you in person. Make sure students understand the negative aspects.

Explain to students that they will be watching a video about two teens who suffered consequences because of the decisions they made online. Watch “Survivor Diaries.”



Discussion Questions

Based on the experiences highlighted in this video, what do both Ryan and Noah have in common? They both communicated with someone they did not know online.

What made Ryan more vulnerable and therefore more likely to get involved with someone online? His parents were going through a divorce; he felt alone; he needed someone to pay attention to him.

Though Ryan never agreed to meet, how do you think someone was able to find him? Even if he didn’t share his address, Ryan probably gave away personal information without realizing it.

What kinds of information should never be shared with people you first meet online? Name, gender, phone number, address, age, school name or mascot, or anything that could help someone identify your location.

It seems like Noah knew better than to communicate with someone he didn’t know online and then meet this person. Why do you think he did it anyway? He was curious; he thought nothing would happen; he was bored.

What should you do if someone you met online asks to meet you or in any way makes you feel uncomfortable? Stop communicating with this person and speak with an adult you trust immediately.



Follow-Up

Explain to students that Ryan and Noah shared their stories because they wanted other teens to learn from their experiences. All teens, like your students, have survived challenging situations that have helped

them learn something about themselves and life. Ask students to write in their journals about a challenging situation they faced, how they sought help, and the life lesson they learned from this experience.