Introduction to Privacy

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Estimated time:	70 minutes ● [30 minutes] Activity #1 ● [40 minutes] Assignment
Group or individual activity:	Group
Ages:	11-18 years old
Grades:	Grades 6-12
Online / offline elements:	This learning experience contains links to online resources to help facilitate a group-based discussion, with an assignment that requires computers or mobile devices with Internet access.
Areas:	Main area: Privacy and Reputation Additional areas: Identity Exploration and Formation, Information Literacy
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Learning Goal

Participants will explore their individual sense of privacy and the impact it has on their own lives. Participants will consider the kinds of information they would like to keep private and the contexts in which they will / won't share specific information.

Materials

- [One per participant] Handout: Privacy Game
- [For participants] Computers or mobile devices with Internet access
- [One per participant] Pens or pencils

Resources

- Book chapter: Born Digital: How Children Grow Up in a Digital Age, [Privacy chapter](#) - by John Palfrey and Urs Gasser
- Book chapter: Born Digital: How Children Grow Up in a Digital Age, [Protections chapter](#) - by John Palfrey and Urs Gasser
- Book chapter: Jóvenes, transformación digital y formas de inclusión en América Latina: [Privacy chapter](#) [pages 289-294] - by Sandra Cortesi, Nelson Remolina, and Mariel García
- Video: [Oversharing: Think Before You Post](#) - by Common Sense Education and Flocabulary
- Video: [Born Digital: Privacy](#) - by Berkman Klein Center's Youth and Media

Activity #1: What Does "Privacy" Mean to You?

[Distribute Privacy Game Handout.]

SAY:
- You make decisions about your privacy every day, especially when you go online using your mobile device or other digital devices. Often, you may not spend a lot of time thinking about each of these decisions. But they all add up to become your own unique understanding of privacy.
- Privacy is the ability to control what other people know about you. You can do this by saying certain things about yourself (like telling other people your address or what you like to do for fun) or doing things around other people (like going to a store with your friends and picking out what you want the most). Privacy matters whether you are in a room with other people or talking to them online.
- Privacy is based on your own decisions. What privacy means to you and your family might be very different than what privacy means to the other people in this

group and their families. If we're more aware of what we value as private, and how our behaviors online can shape our privacy, we'll be able to make better choices about what kind of privacy we want.

- Now we're going to engage in a quick game about privacy [please refer to the Privacy Game Handout] that will help you consider how you think and feel about privacy. You will each fill out your handout, walk around the room with it, and introduce yourself to another participant. You and the other participant will then ask each other questions about the information that is on the handout. Don't show the handout itself to the other participants! Your handout won't be collected at the end of the activity — you are free to take it home or throw it away if you'd like.
- In every conversation, each participant must share at least three answers to questions the other participant poses. Participants can choose to share more than three. Participants can also choose which three or more pieces of information they share. How much information will each participant share? What information will each participant share? Let's walk and talk!

[Have participants fill out the handout. Then allow participants 15 minutes to walk around the room and interact with each other. Afterwards, engage in a discussion with the entire group using the following questions. At the end, make sure the participants either throw their handouts away or take them with them — as the educator, don't collect the sheets.]

ASK:
- Were there any facts that you did not share with anyone? Which ones? Why?
- Which facts did you share? Why?
- Did everyone make the same decisions about what to share? Why / why not?
- Depending on who you share with, why might you share more, or less, of this kind of information? When would you share it?
- Was there anything that you did share during this activity that you would not have shared with everyone you know? Why not?
- Is this kind of information public? Private? Why? Is this the same for everyone?

SAY:
- As you just heard, people made different decisions about what to share and what not to share. They also had various reasons for their choices.
- What we just did was a game. But we make these same types of decisions every day in real life. We decide whether or not to post specific photos online. We decide whether or not we want specific contact information, such as our email

address, publicly available on our social media accounts. What we decide may be different than what our best friend decides or even what we decided last month. Even if we make the same decisions at two different points in time, our reasons might be different.

- These various decisions and reasons represent our personal understanding of privacy.
- Simply stated, privacy refers to how we choose to handle information about ourselves. This information can include parts of our identities, activities, preferences, routines, and other aspects of our lives. In today's digital world, there are more opportunities than ever before to share information about ourselves with others. So it's important that we become aware of our own understanding of privacy, and that we think about whether we're comfortable with that understanding or not.

ASK:

- Based on your behavior in the game about privacy [Privacy Game Handout], as well as your behavior in day-to-day life, how would you define privacy? Why? [Allow time for discussion. Answers and explanations will vary.]
- Is all private information also a secret?
  - Not necessarily. For example, your birthday may not be a secret the way your diary entries are. There are plenty of people in the world who know your birthday and who need to know it, like your parents / caregivers or your doctor. But just because something isn't a secret, you can still perceive it as private. Most of us wouldn't want everyone to know our birthday because we see that as information that only people close to us or people who have a particular reason to know the information should have. These types of decisions about who should know something about us, when, and why are the key to privacy.
- Are there some other things that aren't necessarily secrets that you might still want to keep private from strangers / people you don't know well?
  - Your phone number(s), emails, photos, videos, etc.
- Are there some things you might keep from your parents / caregivers or your friends? How about your teachers or other educators?
  - Your results at school, your Instagram account, your diary, etc.
- Did you learn anything about your personal understanding of privacy that surprised you?

SAY:

- You can take the Privacy Game Handout with you after we wrap up today! Now that you're thinking more about privacy, you will see countless opportunities to make choices every day where you put your own understanding of privacy into action.

Assignment

SAY:
- Now we are going to explore your personal understanding of privacy a bit more.
    1. Find three examples online where someone shared or posted something that you would personally keep private. These can be from celebrities, political figures, or business leaders, or you could search by hashtag or through a general search online to find random examples. Try to find a variety of resources (e.g., photos, videos, text-based posts, such as comments someone made on social media and / or a news media platform) on different topics.
    2. For each example, compose a one-paragraph description of why you would choose to keep this information private. In your paragraph, please also explain if / how your personal opinion on sharing this information changes depending on the context (e.g., who you're interacting with, the number of people involved in the interaction, purpose and goal, environment [school vs. outside of school]).

[Give participants 40 minutes to finish the assignment.]

Privacy Game Handout

Write down the following things about yourself. You can write "No" instead of answering.

First name: _____

Last name: _____

Age: _____

School / Work: _____

Home address: _____

Favorite movie: _____

Best friend: _____

Biggest fear: _____

Most embarrassing memory: _____

Last test / class result: _____

Birthday: _____

Email: _____

Mobile phone number: _____

Social media handle(s): _____

Most recent photo taken: _____
Optional (if you have a mobile device with you, if you'd like, you can select, and, as you walk around, show the most recent photo and / or video you took with your phone.).