

# Analysing health related websites and apps

## Year Learning Activity



### Description

Students investigate ways to access community resources to seek help about health, safety and wellbeing. They then determine criteria for the credibility of a website and evaluate a range of websites and apps.

### Learning focus

Students apply health literacy skills to assess the credibility and reliability of a range of health-related websites.

### Key understandings

- Health literacy is having the knowledge to find, understand and use information about our own health and health care, from sources such as websites and apps, to make healthier and safer decisions.
- There is a range of criteria that can be used to assess the credibility and reliability of a health-related website.

### Materials

1. A ball of wool or string
2. Computer/tablet with internet access [per pair of students]
3. Student Activity Sheet: *Internet information* [one per student]
4. Student Activity Sheet: *How reliable is that website?* [one per student]

## Teaching and Learning Activities

### Before you get started

- Students will be searching the internet for websites and apps in this learning activity. If available, refer to your school's internet usage policy for safe practices when conducting website searches.
- Teachers should know and understand the [protective interrupting technique](#) and what, why, when and how it is needed and used before facilitating this activity.

### Whole Class

1. Discuss safety issues students might encounter in their daily life (e.g. road safety, safety around medications, navigating relationships). Whiteboard responses.
2. Ask:
  - *How do you KNOW if you're safe or unsafe?*
  - *What feelings and emotions do you experience in a safe and in an unsafe situation?*

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- *How would you deal with being in an unsafe, threatening or uncomfortable situation?*
  - *Where might you go to access community resources if you did not feel safe or wanted to stay safe in this situation? (use the situations on the whiteboard that the students have provided above)*
  - *What could you do to make sure you understand the information that you might get from these community resources? (e.g. prepare and ask questions; bring an adult relative to the appointment; ask for things to be explained in another way; ask for an interpreter)*
3. Explain that it is important to have the knowledge to be able to find, understand and use information about your health and health care so that you can make healthy decisions. This knowledge is called health literacy. Stress that part of health literacy is being able to decide whether information that you find on the internet is trustworthy and believable.
4. To demonstrate the complexity of finding credible and reliable information, have students gather around your computer and give one student a ball of wool or string and ask them to hold the end. Explain that you are a 12-year-old female student and you are worried because you haven't started your period yet. All your friends have and you want to find out if you are normal by using the internet.
- Type in "*When is it normal to start your period?*" into a search engine and then click on a range of reliable (e.g. government sites) and not so reliable (e.g. YouTube) sites. Each time you click on a site or a link, have the student holding the ball of wool hold onto their end or piece of wool close to the ball and then pass the ball to another student. A cobweb effect should result to demonstrate that searching for appropriate information is complicated.
5. In pairs, have students guess a definition for the terms 'credible' and 'reliable' and then compare their definitions with a dictionary definition.
- Have students work in pairs or small groups to think about what makes a website credible and reliable and list these as a checklist. Consider:
    - *Who wrote the information or created the website?*
    - *The date on the website (if applicable)*
    - *Could they find other sources (sites) that had the same information?*
    - *Did the site provide links to other sites, or give sources for its information?*
  - Ask:

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- *When searching a site, what indicates that it's an ad?*
- *Why do you get particular ads when you are searching?*
- *How do you decide which web page to use? Is it the top one?*
- *What do you know about the address?*

6. Explain to students that there are a number of terms and words that can assist them to locate, select, navigate and evaluate appropriate websites and online content.

- Provide each student with a copy of the Student Activity Sheet: *Internet information* that lists a number of commonly used terms and pieces of information that can be found on websites. Read through each of them with the students.
- Have students compare this information with the checklists they developed.

## Independent or Small Group

1. Give each student a copy of the Student Activity Sheet: *How reliable is that website?*

Explain that they are going to be using the internet to find some information to help their 12-year-old friend who has told them that he/she is feeling sad and depressed. In groups of five, students use the activity sheet to evaluate which website and app from the list below would be the most reliable and useful for their friend:

### Reliable websites:

Kids Helpline [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

Headspace [www.eheadspace.org.au](http://www.eheadspace.org.au)

Youth Beyond Blue [www.youthbeyondblue.com](http://www.youthbeyondblue.com)

### Not so reliable websites:

Kids health [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

Wikihow [wikihow.com/Deal-with-Teenage-Depression](http://wikihow.com/Deal-with-Teenage-Depression)

### Free reliable apps (downloadable through iTunes or Google Play):

Smiling mind [www.smilingmind.com.au](http://www.smilingmind.com.au)

ReachOut WorryTime [www.reachout.com/reachout-worrytime-app](http://www.reachout.com/reachout-worrytime-app)

ReachOut Breathe [www.reachout.com/reachout-breathe-app](http://www.reachout.com/reachout-breathe-app)

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*Note:* Other relationship/sexual health issues could be used as a trigger for this activity. The teacher would need to preview a range of 'child appropriate' reliable and not-so-reliable sources prior to the lesson.

2. Hear feedback from each group on their chosen website and ask that students justify their answers. Ask:

- *For the particular issue you had to deal with, was the web/an app the best place to find help?*
- *Is the site/app you decided to suggest to your friend as useful as talking to a parent, teacher, doctor or health worker?*
- *When is the web/an app appropriate/inappropriate?*

## Reflection

1. Students use the [Kids Helpline](#) website to find a topic of interest to them (from the homepage, click on the 'Kids' link then scroll down to the 'Helpful info for you!' section).
2. Students describe how they might use this information to:
  - make better decisions about their health
  - advise a friend about an issue that might be bothering them.

## Related assets (links to sections within GDHR site)

### Teaching Note

[Protective interrupting](#)

### Teaching Resources

[Internet information](#)

[How reliable is that website](#)

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