MODULE 3

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING, MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND OVERCOMING HYPERCONNECTIVITY

ERASMEDIAH

Educational Reinforcement Against the Social Media Hyperconnectivity

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Co-funded by the European Union

Lesson 3.1

Empowering youth for self-regulation and setting of social media boundaries

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Lesson Overview

Today, we're going to explore how to empower ourselves for self-regulation in social media use and set healthy boundaries.
In today's digital world, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by the amount of content and the pressure to stay constantly connected. Together, we'll learn how to set healthy boundaries, why it's important to manage our time on social media, and how to make mindful decisions about when and how to use platforms in a balanced way.

The workshop is organized into 4 steps:

1. Introduction to Social Media and Self-Regulation (10 min)

2: Exploring Social Media Habits and Triggers (15 min)

3: Strategies for Setting Digital Boundaries (10 min)

4: Closing Discussion & Takeaways (5 min)

Empowering youth for self-regulation and setting of social media boundaries

Objectives:

- Understand the importance of self-regulation when using social media to maintain mental well-being.
- Identify strategies to set healthy social media boundaries and reduce overexposure.
- Develop critical thinking skills to navigate the digital world responsibly and confidently.

Key Message(s):

- Social media is a powerful tool, but without boundaries, it can lead to anxiety, low self-esteem, and poor mental health.
- Self-regulation is about making intentional choices on how, when, and why we use social media.
- Setting boundaries fosters healthier habits, better relationships, and greater control over your time and energy.

TYPE OF LESSON:

Step 1

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA AND SELF-REGULATION

Let's start with a short video to help us think about something we all encounter every day: social media. We use it for connecting with others, sharing information, and entertainment, but sometimes it can be hard to control how much time we spend on it. In this section, we'll dive into the role social media plays in our lives and explore how self-regulation can help us set healthy boundaries.

Let's watch the video: www.youtube.com
Now that we've watched the video, let's talk about what we've learned!
What are some common challenges youth face when using social media? (e.g., overuse, FOMO, comparison)

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA AND SELF-REGULATION

Did you know that social media can sometimes become an automatic habit? Many people don't realize how much time they spend on social media every day. It can be easy to get caught up in endless scrolling, especially when certain triggers like boredom, FOMO (fear of missing out), or comparison lead us to check our phones.

Social media habits can affect our mental well-being, too.

The more we use social media, the more we may find ourselves feeling stressed, comparing ourselves to others, or feeling anxious when we're not online.

Let's take a moment to reflect on your own social media habits:

1. Write down how much time you spend on social media daily.
2. Think about what triggers your social media use.

EXPLORING SOCIAL MEDIA HABITS AND TRIGGERS

Objective:
Analyze the impact of social media habits on well-being.

Activity:
Group Reflection:
- Discuss the positive and negative effects of social media on your life.
  - Positive: Connecting with friends, sharing ideas, discovering new interests.
  - Negative: Comparing yourself to others, feeling anxious, spending too much time online.

Examples to consider:
- Social media and self-esteem
- Influencers promoting unrealistic lifestyles
- Constant notifications and stress
- Time lost to scrolling instead of being productive

Reflection:
How do these impacts shape your well-being? What would you like to change about your social media habits?

EXPLORING SOCIAL MEDIA HABITS AND TRIGGERS

What do you think about the emotional triggers you experience on social media? Do certain feelings, like **FOMO**, comparisons, or stress from notifications, tend to pop up when you're scrolling? These triggers can affect your emotions and make you react impulsively, sometimes without even realizing it.

In small groups, let's reflect on common emotional triggers you face online. Discuss the following questions:

- Which triggers make you feel anxious, jealous, or overwhelmed?
- How do you typically respond to these emotions?
- Are some of these emotions influencing your behavior?

Activity: Write down your personal emotional triggers from social media. Share them with a partner and discuss how they impact your well-being.

EXPLORING SOCIAL MEDIA HABITS AND TRIGGERS

Let's now explore strategies to manage our screen time and maintain balance. For example, you might say: "We found that setting time limits and muting notifications helps reduce distractions and keep us focused."

Now, let's talk about some useful strategies:

- Set time limits on social media use.
- Mute notifications to avoid constant distractions.
- Create tech-free zones in your home to help unplug and unwind.

Some helpful tools for managing screen time, like:

- Screen Time (iOS)
- Digital Wellbeing (Android)
- Apps like Forest that encourage time offline.

Activity: Let's brainstorm other strategies that have worked for you in reducing screen time and maintaining healthy boundaries. How do you manage your social media use?

STRATEGIES FOR SETTING DIGITAL BOUNDARIES

Let's take a step further and create personalized plans to set boundaries and achieve balance.

Let's start by reflecting on what we've discussed so far and then create your own plan:

- Step 1: Identify your personal triggers and habits.
- Step 2: Set clear goals, such as reducing screen time or designating tech-free times.
- Step 3: Write down actionable steps to achieve these goals (e.g., "Turn off notifications after 8 PM").

Activity: Work on your "Digital Boundary Plan" and then share it with the group. Discuss how these boundaries can positively impact your mental well-being.

STRATEGIES FOR SETTING DIGITAL BOUNDARIES

When it comes to maintaining healthy digital habits, there are many tools and strategies available.

Here are some effective options:

- Apps: Tools like Forest, Freedom, and Moment help you stay focused and reduce screen time.

These resources can make it easier to implement and maintain boundaries.

Creating Your Personalized Boundary Plan

Let's put these tools into action:

- Reflect on your digital habits and identify one area to improve, like limiting screen time or scheduling offline hours.
- Write down one boundary you plan to start today.

Activity:

Share your plan with the group and discuss how these steps can positively impact your well-being.

CLOSING DISCUSSION

To close our session, let's take a moment to think about what we've learned and how we can apply it.

Raise your hand if you've ever felt overwhelmed or stressed because of how much time you spend on social media.

For those who raised your hands, what's one boundary or habit from today's discussion that you think could help?

Let's also think about how we can support each other. How might you encourage a friend to set boundaries for their own well-being?

Every small step we take toward self-regulation helps us build healthier relationships with technology. Thank you all for contributing to today's conversation!

Key Takeaway Summary

- Understand the Impact: Social media can influence mental well-being, especially without clear boundaries in place.
- Practice Self-Regulation: Developing healthy habits around screen time and social media use is essential for balance.
- Set Empowering Boundaries: Establishing limits not only protects your mental health but also helps you feel more in control of your digital life.
- Support Each Other: Encourage friends and peers to embrace boundary-setting for a healthier online community.

Objective:

This lesson equips youth workers, educators, and teachers to guide students in understanding self-regulation and setting social media boundaries. Through interactive exercises, participants will learn strategies to manage digital habits, fostering mental well-being and responsible technology use.

Materials Needed:

- Projector and screen
- Speakers
- Laptop or device for video playback
- Handouts with self-regulation tips and boundary-setting strategies
- Chart paper or whiteboard markers
- Notebooks or paper
- Pens or pencils
- Access to apps like "Forest," "Digital Wellbeing," or "Moment" for demonstration

Step 1: Introduction to Social Media and Self-Regulation (10 min)

Welcome and introduction

Warmly greet participants, setting a positive and engaging tone for the session. Introduce the session's objective: understanding the role of social media in daily life and learning how self-regulation and boundaries can promote mental well-being. Provide a quick outline of the workshop structure, highlighting the interactive discussions and activities ahead.

Video screening or discussion starter

Suggested Video: "Social Media and Mental Well-being" (consider YouTube resources like TED-Ed, or platforms offering content on social media habits).

Explain the purpose: The goal of this step is to spark curiosity and awareness about how social media can shape thoughts, habits, and emotions. Highlight how self-regulation and boundary-setting can help regain control and foster healthier relationships with technology.

Key discussion points:

1. What role does social media play in your daily life?
2. Have you noticed moments where social media use affects your mood or focus?
3. Why might setting boundaries improve your experience online?

Instructor preparation

Materials Needed:

- Projector or screen for video viewing
- Chart paper or whiteboard for listing key ideas
- Markers or digital tools for brainstorming

Step 2: Exploring Social Media Habits and Triggers (15 min)

Introducing tools and strategies
- Greet the participants and explain that the goal of this step is to equip them with practical tools to manage their digital habits and create healthier boundaries.
- Highlight the importance of self-regulation in reducing stress, improving focus, and fostering better relationships.

Demonstrating tools
1. Forest App – Helps students stay focused by growing a virtual tree whenever they avoid using their phones.

Using a projector or screen, show a quick demo of each tool, focusing on features like time-tracking, app limits, and notifications. Emphasize how these tools can support maintaining digital boundaries.

Activity: creating a digital boundary plan
1. Distribute handouts or use a shared worksheet where students can outline their personal boundary plans.
2. Reflection prompt: Ask participants to write down:
   - Their most frequent triggers for excessive screen time.
   - A specific boundary they'd like to set (e.g., no phones during meals, a 30-minute limit on social media).
   - A goal or benefit they hope to achieve (e.g., more focus, better sleep, less comparison).
3. Group sharing:
   - Have students share one boundary they plan to implement with the group.
   - Encourage discussion on how using tools like Forest or Screen Time might support these goals.

Step 2: Exploring Social Media Habits and Triggers (15 min)

Facilitation tips for instructors
- Materials needed:
    - Projector or screen for app demonstrations.
    - Handouts or digital templates for the "Digital Boundary Plan."
    - Internet access for live demonstrations.
- Key questions for discussion:
    - Which tool do you think would help you the most?
    - How might setting these boundaries change your daily routine or mood?
    - How can you stay consistent with your plan?

Wrap-up discussion:
Summarize the key takeaway: Building a digital boundary plan empowers you to take control of your habits and prioritize well-being. Encourage students to revisit and refine their plans regularly.

Step 3: Strategies for Setting Digital Boundaries (10 min)

- Introduce the concept of digital boundaries as a way to balance technology use and personal well-being.
- Emphasize how recognizing personal triggers can empower students to regain control of their screen habits.

Materials needed:

- Pre-designed handouts titled "My Digital Boundary Plan"
- Pens, markers, or devices to record responses
- Tools/apps for demonstration, such as Screen Time, Digital Wellbeing, and Forest

Activity breakdown

1. Reflection on personal triggers: Prompt students to identify and write down situations or emotions that lead to excessive screen time.
2. Demonstrating tool: Show how to use Screen Time (iOS) or Digital Wellbeing (Android) to monitor and limit app usage.
3. Building the plan: Students will complete their "Digital Boundary Plan," setting one actionable boundary (e.g., no screens after 9 PM or creating phone-free zones during meals). Encourage them to include a strategy to overcome potential challenges, such as asking friends or family for support or setting reminders.
4. Sharing and discussing plans: In small groups, students will share one boundary they've committed to.

Discussion questions:

- What difference do you think setting boundaries will make in your daily life?

Takeaway message: Building boundaries isn't about restriction but about creating space for meaningful activities and relationships. By reflecting and taking small steps, students can foster healthier habits and inspire others to do the same.

Step 4: Closing Discussion & Takeaways (5 min)

- Wrap up the session by inviting students to reflect on their experiences and share insights.
- Highlight how setting boundaries can transform their relationship with technology and mental well-being.

Activity breakdown

1. Group sharing: Invite students to share one key takeaway from their "Digital Boundary Plan." Encourage them to explain why this boundary is important to them and how they plan to implement it.
2. Reflection questions:
   - What was the most surprising thing you learned about your digital habits today?
   - Which boundary or tool do you think will be the most challenging to stick to? Why?
   - How can the skills and strategies you learned today support your friends or family?
3. Key takeaways: Reinforce the importance of recognizing triggers for excessive screen time. Summarize the role of tools like Screen Time or Digital Wellbeing in fostering self-regulation. Emphasize that setting boundaries isn't about limitation but about reclaiming focus and mental clarity.

Closing message

Thank all participants for their openness and engagement. Remind them that <u>by setting and modeling healthy digital boundaries, they can inspire a culture of mindful technology use within their communities</u>.

Follow-up and at-home activities

- Daily Reflection: Track social media use for a week and journal the impact on mood and productivity.
- Boundary Buddy: Pair with a friend to hold each other accountable for setting and maintaining boundaries.
- Digital Detox: Try one tech-free day per week and reflect on how it affects your well-being.

Tips for teachers:

1. Create an open environment: Encourage students to share their experiences without fear of judgment. Use examples that resonate with their daily lives, such as social media, gaming, or streaming habits.
2. Use real-life examples: Highlight relatable scenarios to illustrate the importance of boundaries, like muted notifications during study sessions or scheduling breaks from social media.
3. Demonstrate tools in action: Walk students through using apps like Screen Time, Digital Wellbeing, or productivity apps like Forest. Showing these tools in real-time makes them more accessible and practical.
4. Promote collaborative learning: Allow students to work in pairs or groups to discuss their boundary plans and share ideas. Peer collaboration can lead to more creative and relatable solutions.

Tools

Screen Time (iOS)

Apple's Screen Time feature provides insights into daily device usage and allows users to set app limits, schedule downtime, and manage notifications. It's a powerful tool for creating healthy digital habits by helping users monitor and control their screen time.

Access: Go to Settings > Screen Time on any iOS device.

Forest App

The Forest App helps users stay focused by growing virtual trees as they avoid distractions. The longer users stay off their devices, the more their virtual forest thrives. It's an engaging way to encourage mindfulness and manage time effectively.

Download: Available on the App Store and Google Play.

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QUIZ

1. Why is it important to set boundaries for social media use?
A) To avoid being bored.
B) To improve focus, mental health, and personal well-being.
C) To make more friends online.
D) To use all social media features.

2. What is a good example of a social media boundary?
A) Checking notifications during meals.
B) Using your phone in bed late at night.
C) Setting specific times to check your accounts each day.
D) Following every trending topic on social media.

3. What is one key technique to verify if an online news story is credible?
A) Checking how many people liked or shared the story.
B) Reading comments to see what others think.
C) Checking the source and cross-referencing it with reputable outlets.
D) Believing it if it matches your personal opinions.

QUIZ

4. Which of the following is a red flag for misinformation?
A) The story includes a link to a research study.
B) The headline uses overly emotional or exaggerated language.
C) The article cites multiple reputable sources.
D) The content is balanced and avoids extreme claims.

5. What is the purpose of using reverse image search tools?
A) To edit pictures before sharing them.
B) To see how many likes a photo has on social media.
C) To find out if an image is being used out of context or misrepresented.
D) To download high-quality images for free.

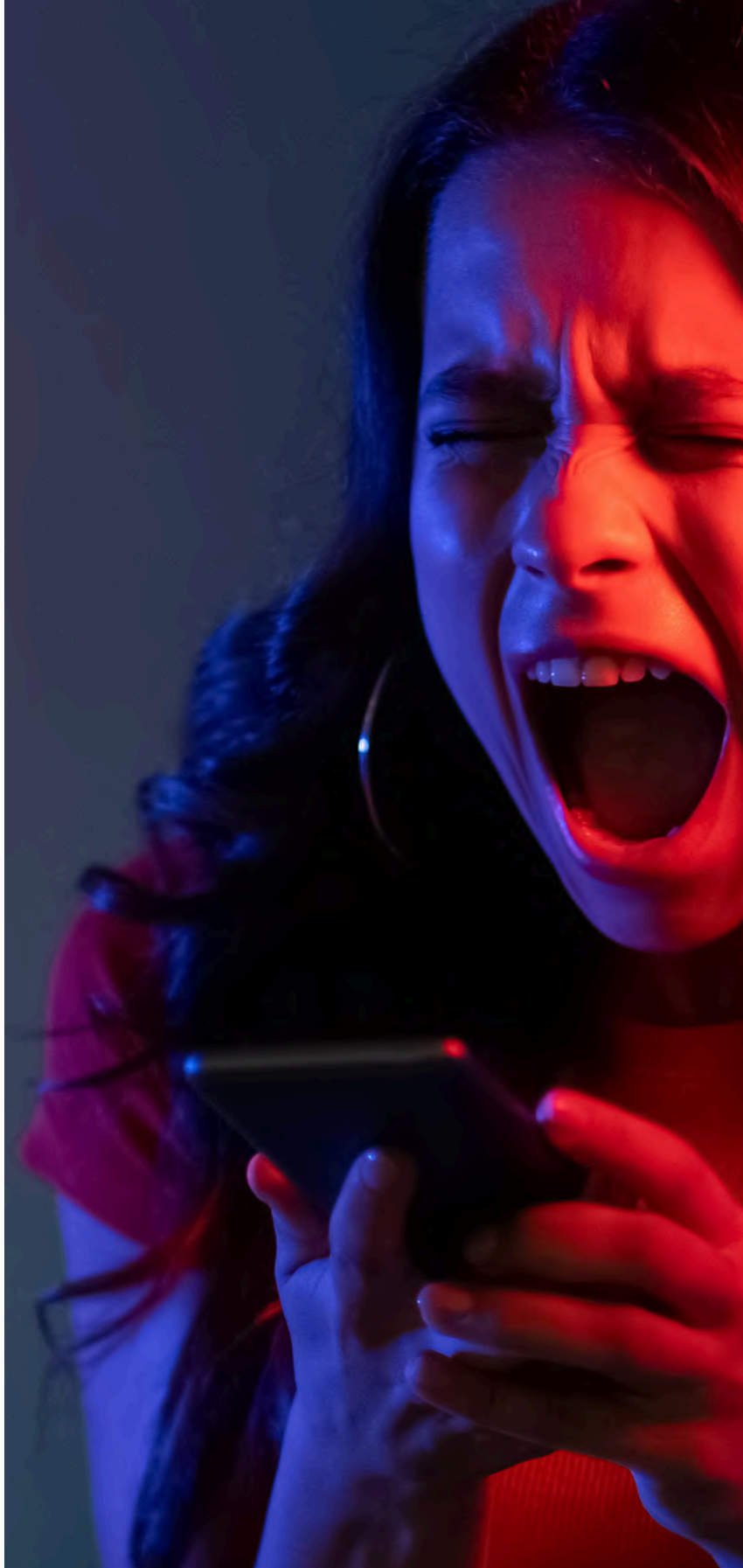# Solutions

Question 1: B
Question 2: C
Question 3: C
Question 4: B
Question 5: C

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