



DIS CONNECTED

TOOLKIT

WHAT IS IN THE (DIS)CONNECTED TOOLKIT?

- DVD of the film (DIS)CONNECTED
- Film Synopsis
- MTV Digital Rights Project
- Discussion Guide
- Optional Activities
- Tip Sheet
- How to Host a Screening

DVD SUGGESTED USE

To encourage learning and discussion, the DVD may be shown in conjunction with the Digital Toolkit, which features sample discussion questions, activity suggestions, and tips for facilitating guided discussions. Research suggests that lessons on Internet safety should not shy away from honest conversations about teen risk-taking, relationships, and sexuality. As such, the materials in this Toolkit include tips for dealing with sensitive issues. Additional tools and resources can be found at <http://www.athinline.org>.

FILM SYNOPSIS

(DIS)CONNECTED, an MTV Original Movie, tells the story of four teens whose lives unexpectedly collide online. Although they have never met before, they have an extraordinary impact on one another, culminating in one night none of them could have imagined. The film is inspired in part by the tragic tale of Abraham Biggs – a 19-year-old who battled bipolar disorder and ultimately webcast his suicide after being egged on by a digital mob. Vividly illustrating how growing up digital complicates life and love, the movie serves as a powerful call-to-action to help end digital abuse by showing what can happen when we forget there's someone on the other side of the screen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The Discussion Guide for (DIS)CONNECTED provides a framework to open up conversation around personal agency, community, and decision-making in the digital space, particularly as it relates to the MTV Digital Rights Project. It is recommended that the facilitator familiarize themselves with this guide, the MTV Digital Rights Project, and the Tip Sheet prior to showing the film.

Connections (The Upsides)

- Technology is omnipresent throughout the film. What are the ways in which technology positively connects the characters – to one another and to the people in their lives? At what points could the characters have taken better control of their digital decisions to avoid negative consequences?
- How did Lisa and Shelly, and Isaiah and Jimmy use technology to communicate and connect with one another for the better?
- How did digital interactions with Carly as well as with the larger music community help Tom develop as a musician? As a person?

Disconnections (The Downsides)

- Do you think Isaiah had healthy relationships with any of his webcast followers? If so, who and how so? What are the risks of having friends that you know only through the Internet?
- Maria expects John to be in constant communication, and goes into a tailspin when she doesn't hear from him immediately. When it comes to digital communication, how much is too much? What do you think constitutes digital harassment?
- Lisa was taken advantage of by a fellow peer masquerading under a false online persona. Could she have better protected herself? Were there any warning signs that "Jack" might not be trustworthy?
- John reacts to Maria's frantic and unpredictable communication by completely ignoring her. Was this the best way to "disconnect" from the situation? Can you think of more helpful or constructive actions that he could have taken?

Life Online

- Isaiah documents all aspects of his life, from the mundane to significant emotional shifts. Why do you think he couldn't digitally "disconnect"? Why is it hard for people in general to digitally "disconnect?"
- Tom is highly expressive and critical of others online, yet he refuses to show his face or reveal his identity. Do you think Tom's behavior is excusable? Do you think people behave differently online than they do in-person?
- What are some benefits of being able to connect with people so easily and quickly? What are some drawbacks?

What Does this Mean for Me?

- Are there ways that this film might influence your digital behavior? If so, how?
- Lisa is pressured by "Jack" to send nude pictures or video. If you experienced a similar situation, how would you respond? What are some things you could say or write to get out of this situation?
- After the revealing video of Lisa is leaked online, an unexpected classmate reaches out to lend his support and advice. In what ways did that act help Lisa deal with the situation? If something similar happened to a friend or peer of yours, how would you respond?
- The characters in the film rely heavily on technology to communicate with their friends. Are there ways you believe your relationships with others would suffer if you did not have access to cell phones and the Internet?

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Prior to the film, hand out blank pieces of paper and ask everyone to make a list of their digital rights. After the film is over, ask them if they would change their list and if so, in what ways?
- Design a role-playing activity. For example, choose a scene from the film in which a character(s) makes a questionable digital decision and ask participants to rewrite and re-enact the scene to have a better outcome.
- Ask everyone to anonymously record an incident of digital abuse that happened to them or that they heard about from a friend. Compile them and then ask the group to pair each incident with a corresponding digital right to show what they might do in reaction.
- Use label stickers and write, "I have the right to" on each one. Distribute the labels and ask everyone to fill it out with a digital right that's most meaningful and relevant to them. (These rights can go beyond the Digital Rights Project to encourage personalization.) Encourage them to post the right as their FB status update or tweet it out to friends.
- Ask everyone to make a Facebook poll asking their friends which digital right is most relevant to their lives. Discuss the results in following class/meeting.
- Join the MTV Digital Rights Project at <http://rights.athinline.org>

MTV DIGITAL RIGHTS PROJECT

The MTV Digital Rights Project is a first-of-its-kind effort to amplify young peoples' voices in the fight to end digital abuse. Going beyond a pledge or simple list of do's and don'ts, it asks youth to share what they believe they deserve when interacting with others online. Some of the most popular rights our audience has already submitted include:

Online and on my cell, I have the right to...

- Live without pressure or abuse.
- Step in and help if I see someone getting harassed.
- End unhealthy relationships.
- Take control of my decisions.
- Disconnect whenever I want.

TIP SHEET

These tips are organized in categories reflected in the Digital Rights Project. Each “Right” is followed by several “tips” for how to use the Internet safely and responsibly. The Tip Sheet is intended to provide actionable suggestions on how to take control of your digital rights and support the rights of your peers. For additional tools and resources please visit <http://www.athinline.org> or <http://www.halfofus.com>.

Take control of my digital decisions

- **Keep your Personal Information Private.** Names, addresses, license plate numbers, where you work, your date of birth, your social security number, your passwords – can be used to steal your identity and hack into your accounts if they get into the wrong hands.
- **Maintain Possession.** Suggestive photos may start off on your camera, but then...wham! You break up and suddenly those photos are plastered everywhere. Even people you don’t know are passing it on and commenting on it. If you do take them, save them – don’t send them – and share in-person, on your device only.
- **Be Proactive.** If things get nasty with constant or threatening messages, save or make a record of everything. It’s good to have documentation in case you need to report it.

End unhealthy digital relationships

- **Communicate.** If you don’t like what’s going down online or in IMs or texts from your partner, talk to him or her about which behaviors are bugging you.
- **Draw Your Line.** No need to settle for relationships or friendships that don’t give you any breathing room. If your inboxes are overflowing with unwanted messages, take control! Delete, block, de-friend, and defend your domain. Post your action to Draw Your Line, at <http://draw.athinline.org>!
- **Block the Bloke.** Your phone company can likely tell you how to block up to 10 unwanted numbers from calling or texting you. Go to <http://www.athinline.org> to find out how.

Interact online and on my cell without pressure or abuse

- **Trust Your Gut.** If you don’t like or feel threatened by something in a text or IM, or anywhere online, tell a friend or adult you trust.
- **Resist Pressure.** When your BFF from 5th grade wanted you to do the chicken dance with her at the talent show, you said no, right? Why send images or messages if you don’t want to? You have the right to say no.
- **Save Everything.** If you’re being harassed or pressured online, save the messages, posts, and comments so that you can back up a request for blocking or even a protective order (should it come to that).

Digitally disconnect whenever I want

- **Disconnect & Reconnect.** While it's easy to text a friend or write on their wall, try picking up the phone or meeting for a cup of coffee from time to time so you can really connect and catch up.
- **Take a Breather.** If you find yourself constantly checking your texts, emails, or social network site, try leaving your phone at home for a few hours so you don't miss out on what's going on around you.
- **Communicate.** If you want to disconnect for a couple of hours or days, give your friends and family the heads up so they know to respect your digital-less time.

Step in and help if I see someone getting harassed online or by cell

- **Reach Out.** If someone you know is having a hard time as a result of online harassment or bullying, reach out directly and let the person know you're there for support.
- **Get Help.** If things are out of control, reach out to a site administrator, parent, teacher, or adult you trust. Adults can help you deal with nasty stuff happening online, but you have to let them know it's happening.
- **Break the Cycle.** Forwards can live forever. If someone sends you an inappropriate or harmful piece of information about a peer, just press delete.

HOW TO HOST A SCREENING

- Hold your own screening! Stream the film from <http://toolkit.athinline.org> or contact support@athinline.org to get a DVD copy.
- Here are a few simple ways to promote and plan your screening:
- Download a customizable poster, the discussion guide and other useful resources at <http://www.athinline.org>.
- Reach out to your school or other organizations you're affiliated with to see if they have a room with video capability they'd be willing to let you use.
- Use your network to spread the word. Holding an event through Facebook or Meetup.com is an easy way to promote, organize and plan a screening for your friends and community.
- Use the Discussion Questions after the show to get the conversation going.
- Serve snacks! Never underestimate the power of free food.

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