

SPLIT DECISIONS



Overview

Students will watch and discuss the video “Split Decisions,” in which viewers see what happens when two teen girls decide whether or not to engage in digital drama. Students will then learn about and practice tactics for dealing with their anger other than cyberbullying or fighting online.



Materials / Preparation

- Computer connected to an LCD projector
- Video – “Split Decisions”
- Attachment 1 – “Try This Instead”



25 minutes



Activity

Tell students they’re going to watch “Split Decisions.” The video follows the decisions of two teen girls who are having a conflict and must decide whether or not to engage in digital drama.

After the video, ask students the following discussion questions:

- *Do you think either Lily or Gabriela saw themselves as causing drama? Why or why not? (The girls may have believed they were defending themselves after being attacked.)*
- *When Lily saw the video Gabriela posted, she thought Gabriela was flirting with her boyfriend Kevin. Let’s try to see things from Gabriela’s perspective. Why do you think she posted the video? (Gabriela thinks of Kevin as a friend. Teens often post silly videos with their friends.)*

- *What do you think Lily’s friend said to help her calm down? What would you say to a friend who wanted to fight with someone online? (Tell them to calm down, to consider the consequences, etc.)*
- *What are some of the reasons you think teens may have drama online? (Because they are angry, they want to get revenge, they don’t like the other person, etc.)*
- *What are some methods Lily used to keep herself from lashing out online? (She called a friend, she took a break, and she talked with Gabriela.)*

Divide students into pairs. Ask them to read about and practice different methods of dealing with digital drama. Hand out copies of Attachment 1 - “Try This Instead” - to guide students.



Follow-Up

Ask students to write a letter to a friend who is dealing with digital drama. What would they say to encourage their friend to take more positive actions?



TRY THIS INSTEAD

It's not always easy to be kind online. It can be tempting to send a mean message if you feel angry, want to defend yourself, or plain just don't like someone. But is that really the type of online environment you want to live in? The Internet is a better place when people treat each other with respect.



When you feel like posting a mean comment, image, or video, try this instead:

STEP AWAY TO CALM DOWN.

Pick an activity that makes you feel better like taking a walk, reading a book, or listening to music. When you are calmer, think about what you were going to post. Would it really help the situation?

TALK THINGS OUT WITH A FRIEND.

Call, text, or get online with someone you trust. Choose a friend who will be supportive, but stay away from hotheads! You need a friend who will calm you down, not wind you up.

PUT ON THE OTHER PERSON'S SHOES.

It can be hard to tell what people mean online. A comment you see as an insult may have been meant as a joke. Consider the other person's point of view before you react.

THINK ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES.

Teens who've been caught cyberbullying have gotten detention, been suspended, and in a few cases even been arrested. Before you press send, think about it. Is this really worth getting in trouble for?

ASK TRUSTED ADULTS FOR HELP.

Adults may be able to give you good advice about how to deal with your feelings and help you talk calmly with the other person.

NOW PRACTICE!

Which of these methods would you use to deal with the scenarios below? Choose a scenario to role-play. Have your partner read it aloud and then act out your response.



You've just received a mean text message from a former friend. You really want to send a mean text back, but instead you....

You're watching a video a classmate posted online. It's...not good. Some of your classmates have left comments making fun of it. You want to join in, but instead you...

You're using a headset to game with other people online. One of them just cost your team the game. You want to insult them, but instead you...

You just posted a picture of you and some friends. Someone leaves a comment saying you look ugly and weird. You want to respond, but instead you...

One of your friends calls, crying. A group of your classmates have been teasing her online. You want to give them a taste of their own medicine, but instead you...