

Developing Mental Health Literacy Skills

Teachers need to support students in developing the skills to become discerning consumers of Internet health information.

Through this activity students will develop critical health literacy skills and practical strategies for effectively searching the Internet to find reliable information about mental health issues through the HeadsUp: Skills for Life resource. Students will be able to identify cues for assessing the reliability of websites and will develop a directory of trustworthy online health information sources.

Exploring the concept

Explain to students that the key to locating trustworthy health information online is to be able to assess the reliability of the author of the website containing the information.

Ask students to reflect on the last time they accessed information online. Discuss the following:

- How confident were you about the accuracy of the information you found?
- Have you ever found websites that contain information that was inaccurate or misleading?
- How did you know it was misleading or inaccurate information?

Explain to students that the Internet is a self-publishing medium which means that anyone can publish on the Internet. As with any information source it is important to evaluate what you find online to make sure that the information is correct and up to date.

Ask groups to use a Google search to find a range of Australian websites that provide information on youth mental health issues.

- Hand out HeadsUp: Skills for life-Student Template for assessing websites and discuss each of the criteria and key questions.

Each group must use the criteria to evaluate the reliability and accuracy of each website that they located. From their research and evaluation, groups create a list of reliable websites for their selected health issue with a description of the information and services they provide.

As a class, compare and discuss students' findings through the following questions.

- Which websites did they think were reputable sites? What cues indicated this?
- Which websites were not as credible? What cues indicated this?

Create a collective list of reliable and trustworthy websites and online services that provide information, support and services for youth mental health.