



DIGITAL FRIENDSHIP

From strangers to best friends? Many friendships are made online every day. What value do digital friendships have?

#DABEI-Geschichten – an initiative by Deutsche Telekom AG
Moderation documents for a workshop (approx. 25 minutes)



LIFE IS FOR SHARING.

PUBLICATION DETAILS

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FURTHER INFORMATION

<https://dabei-geschichten.telekom.com/en/topics/digital-friendship/workshop-25min/>

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CONTACT

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REQUIRED MATERIALS

Tablets, blackboard, flipchart, cards, pen and paper for the participants

NOTES FOR MULTIPLIERS

In the course of this workshop, the phenomena of "digital friendship" and "digital loneliness" will be examined in more detail. Based on the question "What is friendship?" the participants get to know friendships and the possibilities of digital friendships better. Apps and platforms will be presented (e.g. Woe-Bot or Invisible Friends). The areas of "false friends on the net" (cyberbullying and stalking) and "loneliness" will also be addressed during the workshop. Getting to know digital possibilities helps to reduce doubts. In this way, people can decide for themselves which model of friendship (analog or digital) is fulfilling for their lives.

The key messages of the workshop are therefore:

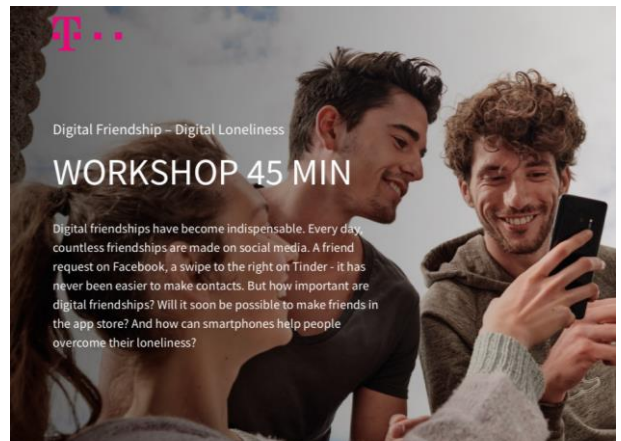
1. Digital friendships are no worse than analog friendships. They can replace them or complement them in a meaningful way.
2. Apps and platforms help to strengthen existing friendships and make new contacts. There are digital friends who are not real, but seem like true friends. This also opens up new perspectives for lonely people.
3. Digital friends can also be false friends. It's not easy to see through them. But there are ways to help.

PHASE 1: DIGITAL FRIENDSHIP

3 MIN.

Procedure

“dabei-geschichten.telekom.com addresses various issues from the digital world. For the next 25 minutes, we will be talking about ‘digital friendship’.”



Task

“On social media, countless friendships are made every day - or are they just pseudo friendships?”

Possible solution

“Digital friendships can also be real friendships.”

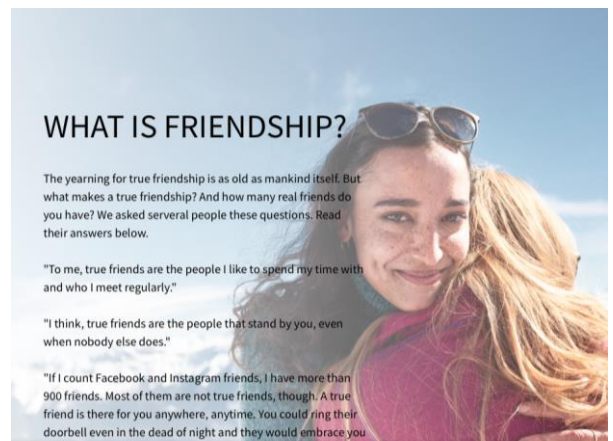
Your Notes

PHASE 2: WHAT IS FRIENDSHIP?

1 MIN.

Procedure

“The yearning for true friendships is as old as mankind itself.”



Task

“Complete the sentence: For me, true friends are...”

Possible solution

“For me, true friends are people I like to spend time with.”

Your Notes

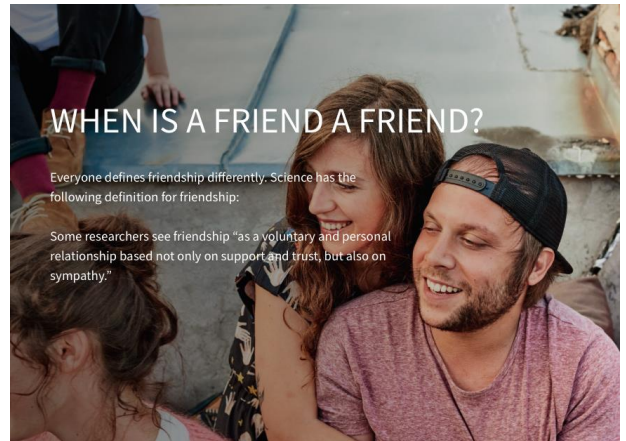
PHASE 3: WHEN IS A FRIEND A FRIEND?

2 MIN.

Procedure

“There are many definitions of friendship. Some researchers see it as a voluntary, personal relationship based on support, trust and sympathy.

The chemistry has to be just right. Sometimes a few similarities such as the same age, similar situations, origins, attitudes or interests are enough. They make us feel like we are on the same wavelength as someone else.”



Task

“Which features link you to your best friends?”

Possible solution

“Same age, same town, same hobbies...”

Your Notes

PHASE 4: WHAT IS DIGITAL FRIENDSHIP?

1 MIN.

Procedure

“Digital friendship is a special type of friendship. It can of course complement an analog friendship or keep people, who do not live in the same place and rarely see each other, connected. But there are also digital friendships between people who never see each other and who, for example, are only connected by a specific topic. That feeling of intimacy or closeness doesn't have to be different from what we have when we know a friend personally.”



Task

“Do you maintain digital friendships? How did these friendships evolve?”

Possible solution

“I have some digital friends who I met via a shared Facebook group.”

Your Notes

PHASE 5: A LOVE SUBSCRIPTION?

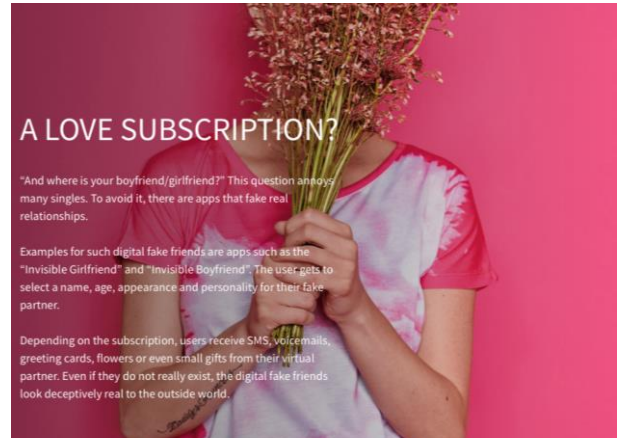
2 MIN.

Procedure

“On the Internet, you can find friends who are not real, but act just like real friends. Invisible Girlfriend and Boyfriend are apps that simulate a real relationship - including messages, greeting cards, and gifts that the app organizes and sends. As a user, you select the basic conditions such as age, gender, etc. and your fake friend is ready.”

Task

“What do you think about this kind of service? Are there situations where it could be useful?”



Possible solution

“Especially when you are not in a relationship at the moment, services like this one can be useful. This way, you can avoid people constantly asking about your love life.”

Your Notes

PHASE 6: FRIENDSHIP – AT FIRST CLICK?

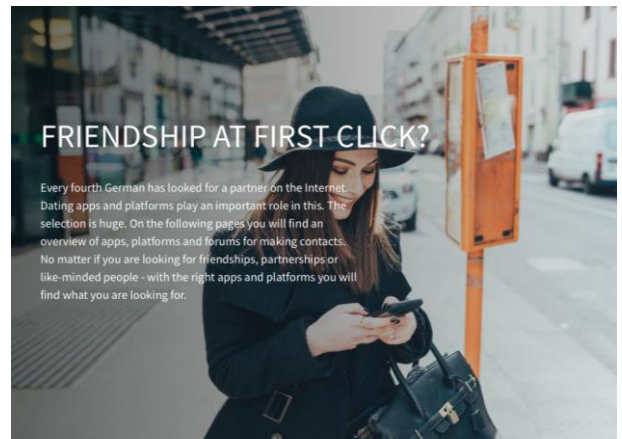
1 MIN.

Procedure

“Every fourth German has looked for a partner on the Internet. Well-known examples are apps such as “Tinder” or “Lovoo”, but also “parship”, where a single person falls in love every 11 minutes, or “Elitepartner” for academic partners. On unverblümt.de one introduces oneself per video, in contrast to other offers. “Schatzkiste” (“Treasure Chest”) is a dating service for people with disabilities.”

Task

“Why are dating platforms so popular? What do you think?”



Possible solution

“Dating platforms make it comfortable and easy for people who are like-minded to get to know each other.”

Your Notes

PHASE 7: MEETING NEW PEOPLE SAFELY

1 MIN.

Procedure

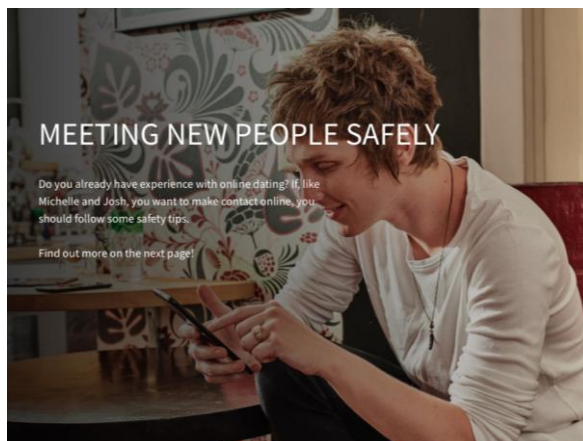
“Unfortunately however, there are also people on the Internet who do not always mean well and it is not always easy to recognize that immediately.”

Task

“Do you have an idea what “Meeting new people safely” could mean? What would be your advice to someone who is meeting a person they met online for the first time?”

Possible solution

- Tell someone, for example a good friend, about the date.
- Do not pass on any information about your place of residence, or upload photos with clues about where you might live.
- When you chat, use a pseudonym (fake name)



- and not your own name at the beginning
- Make sure that your online contact is not a fake by for example, video chatting or talking on the phone
- Meet in public places at the beginning...”

Your Notes

PHASE 8:

FALSE DIGITAL FRIENDS

3 MIN.

Procedure

“The situation really gets bad if you make contact with the “wrong” type of person. Not just on a dating platform, but anywhere on the Internet. We are talking about cyberbullying and cyberstalking. Both also exist in the analog world, but in this workshop we will concentrate on the digital one.”

Task

“Let’s have a look at Cybermobbing. Do you know what is meant by the term?”



Possible solution

“Cyber-Mobbing is a digital version of bullying.”

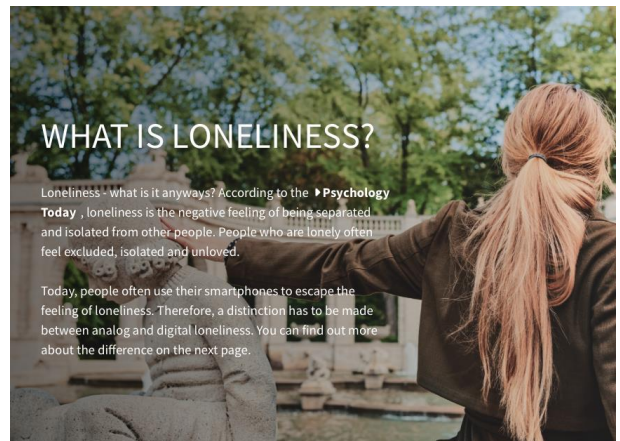
Your Notes

PHASE 9: WHAT IS LONELINESS?

2 MIN.

Procedure

“Let us look at loneliness and what it is all about. How can the digital world keep us from being lonely, and where does it do just the opposite - make us lonely?”



Task

“What exactly is loneliness?”

Possible solution

“Loneliness is the negative feeling of being separated and isolated from other people. People who are lonely often feel excluded, isolated and unloved.”

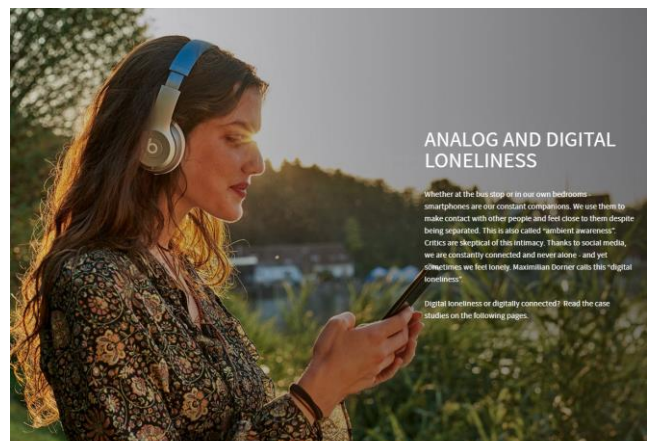
Your Notes

PHASE 10: ANALOG AND DIGITAL LONELINESS

1 MIN.

Procedure

“And what about digital loneliness? Digital loneliness is even more complicated. It is the feeling of being networked 24/7 and thus, never really alone, but at the same time, feeling unhappy and alone.”



Task

“Complete the sentence: This can for example happen, when...”

Possible solution

“...you do not get the intimacy you are looking for through digital friends, e.g. when you are feeling down.

...you digitally follow how people meet and go out with each other in person, but you yourself are not invited.

...you are explicitly excluded such as, for example, in the case of cyberbullying.”

Your Notes

PHASE 11: PHUBBING

2 MIN.

Procedure

“Have you experienced this? You go out with others, but everyone just sits there and types on their smartphones? Or you want to tell someone at home something that is really important and instead of listening, they start answering an e-mail? This phenomenon is called ‘phubbing’.”



Task

“What can you do in situations like these?”

Possible solution

“Digital-Detox: Interesting in this context are applications like ‘Face it down’ and ‘Forest’ which help to put your smartphone down and leave it there.”

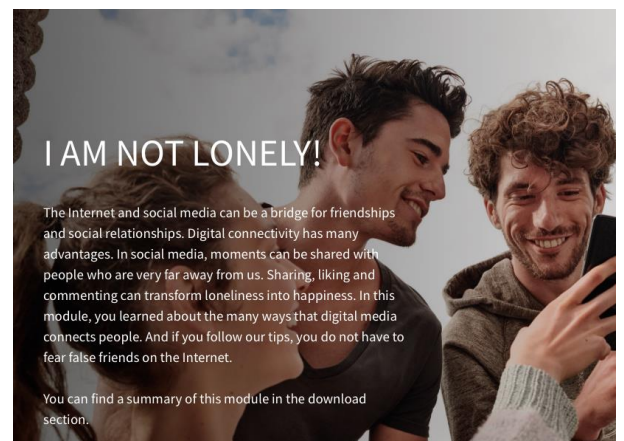
Your Notes

PHASE 12: I AM NOT LONELY!

6 MIN.

Procedure

“Digital relationships are not worth less than analog ones. They can complement and even replace them.”



Task

“What was new for you?
What will you tell your family and friends about what you have learned?
Which questions still need to be answered?”

Possible solution

“Fake-friends, examples like ‘phubbing’, etc.”

Your Notes



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