

The Law-Related Education Academy is facilitated by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education with funding made possible by the Arizona Department of Education School Safety Program.

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**“Social Media Savvy”: Academy**  
(Staff & Community)

**What’s Up with WhatsApp? Lesson Plan**

*This lesson is to be used with the adult school community; not students*

**Objectives: Participants will...**

- Understand why WhatsApp may be appealing to youth
- Learn the facts and myths about WhatsApp
- Practice setting up a WhatsApp account in order to guide others
- Explore strategies to be safe when using WhatsApp

**Materials:**

- ✓ Large paper and markers for each group
- ✓ Electronic device such as smartphone, tablet, laptop, etc. with internet access and capability to explore social media sites
- ✓ Copies of the Marketed Description of WhatsApp-1 per participant
- ✓ Signs: ‘FACT’ and ‘MYTH’
- ✓ WhatsApp Handout-1 per participant

**Timeframe:** 45 Minutes

**Facilitator Tip:** *Electronic devices can vary and the steps indicated in the lesson may not be exact for the user’s device. Look for screen icons such as the Gear Icon, 3 Bars, 3 Dots, People Icon, Arrow and/or Company Logos. Also look for words such as, Settings, Account, Privacy and Profile. “How to...” questions for finding features on specific devices can be searched in the search box of the app page or an internet search engine.*

**Activity 1: What are the Risks and Benefits to Using WhatsApp?**

1. Begin the activity by placing participants into small groups of 4 or 5 people in each. Provide large paper and markers for each group.
2. Hand each participant or group a copy of the Marketed Description of WhatsApp and instruct the participants to review the description and then discuss with their group.

*WhatsApp is a free messaging app that allows the user to stay in touch around the world with friends and family through messaging and calling. A variety of media can be exchanged such as text, photos, videos*

documents, and voice calls, using your phone's internet connection instead of cell voice minutes, without a third party being able to read or listen, including WhatsApp. Other features include group chats and customized notifications. These chats can be synchronized to work on most electronic devices. There are no extra fees for using WhatsApp's features. <sup>1</sup>

3. Next, instruct the groups to brainstorm a list of reasons they think youth might be enticed to use this app.

**Possible Reasons:** connect with anyone around the world, appears private or secret, users can be anonymous, live group chats, no extra costs, works on any device, utilized a variety of media, adults are not as familiar with it as Facebook, no ads, one-on-one instead of public (you have to give someone your number and they have to have an account then you have to add them to your list on contacts, etc.)

### Activity 2: Fact or Myth?

4. Next, post two signs: 'FACT' and "MYTH" on opposite sides of the room. Inform the participants that you will read a statement about the 'WhatsApp' app and they will decide if they think it is a fact or myth by standing next to or pointing to that applicable sign.
  - A. Since WhatsApp uses encryption codes no one, not even WhatsApp, can view or access the user's content. **Myth:** not all messages are encrypted, court orders have forced WhatsApp to reveal information.
  - B. When receiving the popup that asks how often you want your personal profile data backed-up, you should go into settings and choose 'Never'. **True:** WhatsApp encourages users to back up messages by providing the options of 'how often' instead of whether you 'want to'.
  - C. Selecting "Clear all chats" will keep your messages safe from being found again. **Myth:** the iCloud (computer service that stores information and makes it available for users to access all their information) can be hacked or requested in police investigations.
  - D. On WhatsApp, you can keep who you chat with private from the public. **Myth:** Who you chat with, how often and what groups you are a part of can be transferred to the owner of WhatsApp-Facebook, Facebook can use this information anyway they want. An example of Facebook's use is to suggest 'Friends' or ads; this feature cannot be opted out of.
  - E. The more people in a group chat, the higher the likelihood that the conversation is not encrypted and enters the iCloud. **True:** 99% chance with groups of 7 or more; 97% with 5; 87% with 3 members.
  - F. WhatsApp is one of the most popular app worldwide. **True:** according to Statista December 2017, WhatsApp had 1.5 billion monthly active users worldwide: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/260819/number-of-monthly-active-whatsapp-users/> ; Snapchat is number 1 for teens in America with 79% of users followed by Facebook at 76% and Instagram at 73%, while WhatsApp ranks in at 15%, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/199242/social-media-and-networking-sites-used-by-us-teenagers/> ;
5. After participants have decided fact or myth, reveal the research. When all statements have been read and the answers revealed, instruct the participants to discuss among their group the possible risks this app may pose for youth and be ready to share.
6. Rotate around the room and ask for volunteers to share an idea from their group. As facilitator, record

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<sup>1</sup> WhatsApp Features: <https://www.whatsapp.com/features/>

responses on the board.

**Possible Responses:** any app user can see their posts, any app user can potentially learn their location, any app user can request to be added as a contact to any user's contact list, users may feel safe uploading inappropriate content, etc.

### **Activity 3: How do you Set-Up a WhatsApp Account?**

1. Instruct the participants to install the WhatsApp from their app store on their cell phone or the tablets provided.
2. After the download is complete, instruct the participants to **Open** their WhatsApp and proceed to setting it up. They will need to tap **Agree and Continue** and click **Done**. The next screen will take them to a text field to enter their phone number. Explain that WhatsApp will text back a confirmation code or automated phone call. When this code is entered, WhatsApp will allow you to customize your profile.
3. Inform the participants that the only information that needs to be accurate is their phone number and that they don't have to provide accurate information or any information for each profile option.
4. Instruct the groups to discuss reasons for accurate information versus fake information for each profile question. Each participant may make their own decision as to what they enter.
5. For installing WhatsApp on different devices, see (<https://www.wikihow.com/Install-WhatsApp> )
6. Ask for volunteer to comment on what information they chose not to complete and why?

### **Activity 3: What Strategies can Keep you Safe When Using WhatsApp?**

1. Ask the audience to call out dangers or risks that could occur on any social media site and record the responses on the board.

**Possible Suggestions:** predators, bullies, stalkers, overshare, exposure to inappropriate content, lack of safety controls, identity theft, scams, etc.

2. Assign each group one category of danger or risk from the board. Then, instruct the groups to brainstorm possible precautions they could take or help their family take in order to be safe on WhatsApp.
3. Rotate around to each group and have volunteers share their ideas. Ask the listening audience to comment and add any ideas not mentioned. Hand each participant the WhatsApp handout-see Parent Tips on the WhatsApp Handout.
4. To **Delete** the account: **WhatsApp > Menu > Settings > Account > Delete > Enter Full Phone Number > Delete my Account**

### **Debrief: What did you learn?**

Ask volunteers to share something new they learned and how will they use that new information.



WhatsApp is a free messaging app that allows the user to stay in touch around the world with friends and family through messaging and calling. A variety of media can be exchanged such as text, photos, videos documents, and voice calls, using your phone's internet connection instead of cell voice minutes, without a third party being able to read or listen, including WhatsApp. Other features include group chats and customized notifications. These chats can be synchronized to work on most electronic devices.

There are no extra fees for using WhatsApp's features.

<https://www.whatsapp.com/features/>

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**FACT**

**MYTH**

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**“Social Media Savvy”: Academy**

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**What’s Up with WhatsApp? Community Lesson Handout**

*This lesson is to be used with the adult school community; not students*

**WhatsApp Description**

- Mobile Messaging App available on most devices
- Utilized existing phone contacts with no fees
- Group Chat with up to 256 App users

**How To:**

- **Set Privacy Settings:** WhatsApp > Settings > Account > Privacy
- **Exit Group Chat:** Name of group > Group Info > Exit Group
- **Block Sender:** Settings > Account > Privacy > Blocked Contacts
- **Delete Contact:** Contact List > Highlight > Delete
- **Disable Account:** Settings > Account > Delete My Account
- **Delete Account:** WhatsApp > Menu > Settings > Account > Delete > Enter Full Phone Number > Delete my Account

**Be Aware:**

- Your online status (online or not) cannot be hidden from the public users of WhatsApp
- The **Default Status** is set to ‘**Public**’, any WhatsApp user can view who is online
- The popularity of the app makes it a target for hackers, encrypted messages can still be hacked
- Postings last 24 hours, enough time for cybercriminals and contacts to access content and use anyway they want
- The **Alert** feature that informs when other users from your contact list are online, cannot be disabled
- Any app user can contact you or your contacts and request to be added to your contact list or your contacts’
- Group chats can still contain contacts you have blocked or are not in your contact list
- You cannot control if you are added in a group chat, however you can always exit

### Parent Tips:

- Discuss which **Profile Photo** is appropriate to upload. This photo can be changed within 30 days of setting up the account, after that it cannot be changed. The photo does not have to be an image of the user. Discuss the pros and cons of posting a picture of themselves as the profile
- Discuss with your teen who should be added to their **WhatsApp Contact List** and the importance of discussing any future contacts they wish to add
- Discuss Pros and Cons of each **Status Messages Setting**. “Everyone” would allow the public user to see their information; “My Contacts” would only allow the contact users they indicate; and “Nobody” would not allow anyone to view their information
- Discuss with your teen, pros and cons for setting ‘On’ or ‘Off’ their **Location Tagging** when a photo or video is taken. Information will appear on a map to App users in their contact list when the setting is ‘On’.
- Review how to **Delete and Block** unwanted, inappropriate content or unknown contacts. Encourage your teen to report to you anytime they feel the need to block content or delete a contact
- View **Last Seen** that shows last time your teen shared with contacts
- Inform your teen that they can leave a group chat if they don’t know someone in the group or the chat makes them feel uncomfortable for any reason
- Check out all apps and icons in your teen’s devices, some could be hidden vault apps that hide their apps, photo albums, videos, sexting, and alternative accounts. Look for duplicate apps, research what is ‘trending’, place mobile parental controls, and keep communication going with your teen
- Encourage your teen to share any experiences that makes them uncomfortable, cause uncertainty, or promote questions.
- Research popular monitoring devices that allows you to view and be alerted to your teen’s online activity