Stranger Safety Lesson Plan: Let’s Chat
(Grades 6-8, 45 minutes)

Learning Objectives: Students will identify warning signs in a text only conversation.

Materials:
- Blank paper and pens/markers for each student
- A large board or empty space to hang papers on
- Tape or other tool to hang papers with

Preparations:
Hang six blank pieces of paper (ideally shaped like a thought bubble/text box icon) in a horizontal row at the top of the board.

Lesson
Introduction: Text-only conversations are a basic part of life today for kids and adults. Instant messaging, chat rooms, emails, and text messages can be sent by anyone to anyone else. This makes it easy for people to pretend to be someone they are not. These types of conversations are convenient and easy, but they can also be dangerous. Without face-to-face interaction, it is as if the person on the other end of the conversation is wearing a mask. Although you can’t physically see if a person is being truthful, there are warning signs you can look for in text-only conversations with people you have not met in person.

Activities:
1. As a group, brainstorm different places where you are currently having text-only conversations. Examples include cell phones, Facebook, Twitter, email, Instagram, and chat rooms. Write one of these answers/categories on each of the blank sheets of paper you hung on the board.
2. Let’s Chat Activity:
   a. Split the group into smaller groups by row if possible. Choose one category to start with.
   b. The teacher should start a virtual conversation by hanging up an ice breaker under this category and taking on the role of stranger. For example, if the category is Facebook you might write “Hey, I know your friend Shawn!”
   c. Ask one row to take turns writing a response they might actually use. After each student, the teacher should post a response with at least one containing a warning sign such as: flirting language, sexual content, request for personal information, discrepancies in personal information offered, and asking for a face-to-face.
   d. Repeat the process with each category.
   e. When all categories have a running conversation of 5-7 messages, end the activity. Discuss which messages in each category are red flags for a potentially dangerous situation and why.

Learning Outcomes: While using social media throughout their day, students should take note of conversations that include any of the warning signs discussed.