

Destiny Awaits: a digital story about coercion

TEACHER GUIDANCE

You can use this resource to help learners with autism and other types of SEND to

- recognise when they may be being coerced
- understand the potential consequences of being persuaded to do things that are wrong or even illegal
- understand what to do if they think they are being coerced.

It also provides opportunities for learners to develop and practise their **English skills** including:

Reading

- Read the text on the slides, including informal chat, instructions and narrative

Speaking and listening/communicating

- Respond to questions from a tutor or other group members
- Listen to others
- Contribute ideas to discussion

INTRODUCTION

Learners with autism, and other types of SEND, can be particularly vulnerable to being manipulated by others and tricked or coerced into behaving in a way that may cause offence or even be illegal. They may not question the motives of those they are involved with. They may be distracted by the ‘friendship’ on offer or the excitement of engaging in particular acts and find it difficult to think through the possible consequences of their actions for themselves or others.

This resource takes the form of a digital story in which learners are exposed to a form of simulated coercion by someone with extremist views. As they move through the game at their own pace, they are faced with a series of scenarios and get to choose how they respond. When they make good choices, they are rewarded with a ‘Well done’ and the option to explore what might have happened if they had made a different decision. If they make a poor choice, they simply move along through the story until it reaches its dramatic climax.

The game ends with the question, ‘What have you learned?’, inviting the learner to reflect on their experience of the game. This could be done one-to-one with a member of staff or as a pair or group exercise if multiple learners have played the game.

ADAPTING THE RESOURCE

Before you use this resource with your learners, you are strongly advised to work through it yourself, investigating the storyline and the scenarios included. You may also need to adapt certain elements to suit their needs and the locality in which you are working before you make it available to learners.

You may need to substitute the photos of a young man on Slides 18 and 20 for photos of a young woman to make the scenario more appealing to heterosexual male or lesbian learners.

You might include a different extremist poster from the one currently featured on Slide 25 to reflect the extremist activity or priority concerns in your own local area.

You **will** need to insert an extremist message on Slide 35 where it says, '*Insert your Own Text Here*'. This is to allow you to fit the message to the poster you have chosen to use on Slide 25 and so you can decide what form of language is appropriate for your learners.

PLAYING THE GAME

The resource has deliberately been designed to resemble a combination of a messaging app and an online game. This is both to make it attractive to learners and to simulate the online world in which they may encounter coercion. It has been designed so that learners, who are able, can navigate through it by themselves. They simply need to use the mouse to click through the slides in Slide Show mode.

However, you may prefer to have a member of staff sitting side-by-side with some learners, so that they can support their reading or so that they can discuss 'in real-time' the decisions that they will be asked to make. Staff should try not to guide learners into particular choices; one of the main purposes of the game is to help learners understand the consequences of their own decisions while in the protected environment of a simulated game.

TASK 4: REFLECTIVE DISCUSSION

Once learners have completed the game, you can take the opportunity to reflect with them on their experience of playing and what they have learned in doing so. The nature of the discussion will depend on the abilities of the learners but could include the following:

Questions:

- How did Destiny try to make you think he or she was your friend?
- What different tactics did Destiny use to try to persuade you to do what he or she wanted?
- Why do you think Destiny wanted *you* to share the poster on social media, make the video or paint the message on the bus stop? Why didn't he or she just do it themselves?
- Now you know Destiny was actually a 56-year old man, let's go back to the beginning. Were there any signs that Destiny might not actually be who they say they were?
- If you clicked YES to sharing the poster, making the video or painting the message, what made you do that? (e.g. was it about friendship, were you afraid, did you not know how to say No?)
- Why is it never a good idea to share naked photos of yourself online?
- What should you do if someone online or in real life is trying to get you to do something you don't want to do or are uncomfortable or unsure about?
- How did talking to Destiny make you feel? Were your feelings the same at the start as at the end?

Observations:

- If someone is trying to get you to do something you don't want to do by threatening you or frightening you, that is coercion and it is wrong
- Sometimes people start by being very friendly and even give you presents, but then they change and begin to ask you to do bad things or threaten or frighten you. You should always tell a trusted adult if this is happening to you.
- People online sometimes pretend to be someone that they are not. Be careful how much you tell people when you are talking online.
- Actions always have consequences. Try to think through what might happen if you do something. Will it turn out well for you? How will other people be affected?
- Sharing extremist messages online, through graffiti or putting up posters is a crime. You can be arrested and even sent to prison.
- Files shared online, including patches and photos, can contain viruses and damage your computer or games console.