**Libel**

* The First Amendment does not protect you under certain circumstances, one of which is “Libel” or “Slander”.
* **Libel** is publicly posting or publishing false information that can damage a person’s reputation.
* **Slander** is verbally stating false information in public or amongst a group of people when that false information can damage a person’s reputation.
* **Lying** is stating information you know to be false. The information is not related to (or does not identify) a specific person.

**Libel & Slander:** Just don’t do it

It impacts others:

It can impact their ability to acquire a job or get promoted. It can lead to them being charged with a crime.

It impacts you:

You can be sued for libel and slander. If the person can prove they have suffered damages as a result of your actions, they can sue you; you can lose your assets, you can acquire massive debt. You lose credibility and people’s trust.

**Activity:**

* Read the following and discuss whether or not you feel “Libel” has occurred with these statements.
  + Does it present false information as fact?
  + Does it identify a specific person?
  + Can it damage a person’s reputation?
* Discuss with a partner or a group.
  + (Keep in mind, you may not always agree with other people during this activity. These posting, and many postings, are often in a grey area. Active listening is more important than getting someone to agree with you)

**Posting 1) Peter: “Hey, I heard you hooked up with Jess DeLuca (his teacher).”**

**Lewis: “Yeah, I totally did.”**

* 1. Did Peter state false information? Why or why not?
  2. Is Peter guilty of “Libel”? Why or why not?
  3. If Lewis did not have any relationship with Jess, is Lewis guilty of “Libel”? Why or why not?

**Posting 2) Jen: “A girl in my History class is so easy. I’ve seen her at our teacher’s house.”**

* 1. If this is not true, is Jen guilty of “Libel” against the girl in her class? Why or why not?
  2. Is she guilty of “Libel” against the teacher? Why or why not?

**Posting 3) Courtney: “Paula is such a bad boss. She takes money from the business to go out and party. I think she has a gambling problem.”**

* 1. If this is not true, is the first statement “Libel”? Why or why not?
  2. Is the second statement “Libel”? Why or why not?
  3. Is the third statement “Libel”? Why or why not?

**Posting 4) Duncan: “Jack Jones #sexualharrassment”**

* 1. What does this posting imply?
  2. Is this “Libel”? Why or why not?
  3. What could happen to Jack Jones as a result of this?

**Posting 5) Bianca: posts a picture of a girl from her class and underneath it, she posts: “Girls at my school are cheaters”**

* 1. Is Bianca guilt of “Libel”? Why or why not?
  2. Is Bianca guilty of bullying? Why or why not?
  3. What could happen to the girl she photographed as a result of Bianca’s post?

**Posting 6) Angel: “Justine is so hot. We’re going to have fun later.”**

* 1. Is Angel guilty of “Libel”? Why or why not?
  2. Is Angel guilty of bullying? harassment?
  3. What could happen to Justine as a result of this posting?

**Reflection:**

1. Have you ever posted something about a specific person that is not true?
2. Have you ever had anything posted about you that is not true?
3. Do you think people think about the consequences of their posts before they post them?
4. What do you think are the consequences from school officials for posting false information?
5. Do you think some students should get less of a consequence? What students? Under what circumstances? What is “fair” (in your opinion)?
6. What, do you think, is an appropriate response from the person being accused of “Libel”? Should they defend their post? Should they try to make amends?
7. If the person defends their post, what does that say about the person accused of “Libel”?
8. If a person tries to make amends for their post, what does that say about the person accused of “Libel”?
9. Do you think, once amends are made, the false statement no longer exists (no longer affects the person who was identified in the statement)?
10. What steps can you take to protect yourself and others?