

## Safety Secrets 5 – How to Spot a Liar

**Goal:** To teach students how to spot a liar and how it can be applied towards their safety.

Time: 1 hour

Materials:

1. Flip Chart or Craft Paper
2. Pencils
3. Art Supplies on hand in the classroom.

Leader's notes:

1. We all want to trust our friends, neighbors, teachers, and family.
2. One way to trust someone is to know they are truthful.
3. Have you ever talked to a friend or family member and knew in your gut they were saying something false?
4. It is possible to train yourself to look out for signs that will help you determine whether a person is lying.

Leader's notes:

1. Human beings are horrible liars.
2. Before we can think straight enough to tell a lie, we have already given clues of not telling the truth.
3. Although a person who is fibbing may not exhibit all the behaviors we will discuss, it important to identify them when you notice it.

Leader's notes:

1. The first strategy is to establish a baseline first (discussed in Safety Secret 1 – Situational Awareness).
2. When a person is taking a lie detector test, the administrator asks easy questions (like your name) in order to determine the person's baseline. This includes...
  - a. Breathing rate
  - b. Pulse
  - c. Blood pressure
  - d. Perspiration rate
3. Then they determine whether the person taking the test or interviewee is lying when asked more difficult questions.

Leader's notes:

1. To establish a person's baseline, you have to be familiar with their everyday behavior.
2. Establish the person's baseline behavior by doing the following...

- a. Make them feel comfortable – observe them while doing something they like for instance watching television or eating good food.
- b. Learn what they already know – Ask them questions that you already know the answer to like how many siblings they have.
- c. Observe them – When they are answering easy questions, make a note of their behavior. Below is an example of basic mannerisms...
  - i. Tapping foot
  - ii. Biting fingernails
  - iii. Clearing throat
  - iv. Tossing hair
  - v. Unusual facial expressions
  - vi. Sighing
  - vii. Playing with clothes
3. If you note what behaviors a person exhibits while telling the truth, it is easier to notice changes in behavior if they are lying.

Leader's notes:

1. Now we will discuss the “Lying Behaviors”
2. It doesn't mean that a person is lying if they show one of these behaviors.
3. You are looking for groups of behaviors or a few signs.
4. If the person shows groups of behavior and these behaviors are not part of the person's baseline, then it is likely they are telling a lie.

Leader's notes:

1. “Lying Behaviors” are as follows...
  - a. The first three to five seconds
    - i. If a person is lying they will demonstrate groups of behaviors in the first three to five seconds.
    - ii. The person may start stuttering or stumble over details as they are trying to create the story.
  - b. Indirect answers – a guilty person will not answer your questions directly.
    - i. A liar will list reasons why you should believe them.
    - ii. They may tell you all the wonderful things they have done like volunteering.
    - iii. A truthful person will simply answer your question rather than convince you of their honesty.
  - c. Religion – some people may say you can trust them because they are a religious person.
    - i. If you ask someone for proof of something, they may not give it to you.
    - ii. They assume you should trust them because “all people” of that religion are trustworthy.
  - d. The Feet – your feet can give clues of a dishonest person
    - i. If you ask someone a hard question while they are sitting on the couch, and their feet start jiggling then they are probably lying.
    - ii. If the person's feet are still when you ask them if they took money and their feet start shifting after answering the question, then they are probably lying.

- iii. Our feet point us in the direction we want to go.
  - iv. If you are talking to someone and their feet are pointing toward the door, then there is a good chance they want to leave.
- e. The Freeze
  - i. It is common for a person who is lying to move less or freeze.
  - ii. If you want to know who passed gas, look for the person who is frozen instead of those looking around.
- f. The Over-Stare
  - i. Many assume that a person looking down while being questioned is lying.
  - ii. However, a person who is lying would most likely stare at the person questioning them.
  - iii. This tactic is used to convince others they are being honest.
  - iv. The over-stare is not normal human behavior.
- g. The Overreaction
  - i. People who are lying tend to have extreme overreactions.
  - ii. The person lying is trying to make you feel discomfort for questioning them.
  - iii. Overreaction discourages the person from wanting to question the liar again.
  - iv. Overreaction can be displayed through anger and screaming.
- h. The Light Punisher
  - i. Someone who is lying may suggest a lighter punishment.
  - ii. It maybe impactful to ask a group of people what they think the punishment should be.
  - iii. Those who are innocent may suggest an appropriate or hard punishment.
  - iv. However, the guilty person may suggest a lighter punishment.
  - v. For example, if someone took money from the teacher's desk, then the teacher can do a written questionnaire about the punishment.
  - vi. Innocent people may say the person should be expelled or their parent should be notified.
  - vii. The guilty person may say that the person should be told to never do it again. You can always replace money.
- i. The Non-Answer
  - i. A dishonest person will answer your question indirectly.
  - ii. For example, if you ask a dishonest person a question, they may reply by saying "What?" This gives them more time to come up with a lie.
  - iii. They may answer with another question or refuse to answer at all.
- j. The Head Shake – watching how a person shakes their head.
  - i. This may be more difficult to catch.
  - ii. If you ask a person a question, and they are truthful, then their head moves before the words come out of his mouth.
  - iii. If you ask a person a question, and they dishonest, then their head shakes yes or no after he started speaking, chances they are telling a lie.

## Activity: Spot the Liar

### Leader's Note:

1. Write on small pieces of paper the word Lie and Truth.
2. You should have 4 pieces of paper with the word "Lie" and another 4 pieces of paper with the word "Truth"
3. Give each student a copy of the "Lying Behaviors" and their descriptions.
4. Another option is to put the Lying Behaviors and their descriptions on the wall around the class so everyone can see them.
5. Divide students into groups of 3 or 4.
6. Give each group paper and pencils.
7. Instruct each group to write five open ended questions that describes something about the person.
8. If students are having trouble creating questions, please share the examples below (questions come from [goodnightsleepsite.com](http://goodnightsleepsite.com)).
  - a. What was your favorite part of the day? Why?
  - b. What makes a nice friend?
  - c. What magic power do you wish you had? Why?
  - d. If you could go anywhere, where would you go? Why?
  - e. What are you thankful for today? Why?
  - f. What do you like about school? Why?
  - g. What makes you excited (a party / a school performance / going to a restaurant / etc.)?
  - h. What did you like the most about the weekend? Why?
  - i. Why did you choose (that book / that shirt / that toy)?
9. After each group has completed their question, call each group (one at a time) to the front of the class.
10. The group at the front of the class will be the interviewees or being asked a question.
11. Call another group to be the interviewers or those asking the question.
12. Give each person from the interviewee group **either** one Truth paper or one Lie paper.
13. Distribute each member of the interviewee group an equal number of truth and lie papers.
14. Each person from the interviewee group will come to the front (one at a time) and someone from the interviewer group will ask that person a question.
15. The person from the interviewee group will answer the question.
16. If the person has a Lie paper then they will answer the question dishonestly.
17. If the person has a Truth paper then they will answer the questions honestly.
18. While the person is answering the question, class members should look for the lie behaviors.
19. After the person has answered the question, have the class vote as to whether they thought the person was lying or telling the truth.
20. If they thought the person was lying, ask them to identify lie behaviors they observed.
21. If they thought the person was being truthful, have them tell you why.

22. Below is an example of how the activity will go...
- a. Group one is called to the front to be the interviewees.
  - b. The instructor will give each group member a lie or truth paper.
  - c. Tell the group members to hide their paper from others.
  - d. Group 2 is assigned to be the interviewers.
  - e. A person from Group 2 will ask each member from Group One a (one) question.
  - f. You can put a time limit on how long people talk like one minute.
  - g. The interviewee from Group 1 will answer the question honestly or dishonestly based on their paper.
  - h. After the Group member from Group 1 has answered, the class will vote as to whether the person was lying or telling the truth.
  - i. Then have the Group member answering the question will reveal truth.
  - j. Next, Group 2 (from the interviewer group) will ask another member of the Group 1 (interviewee group) a different question.
  - k. After all members in Group 1 have answered a question, the instructor should take the truth and lie papers from them.
  - l. Repeat steps a-k until all class members have answered a question and all groups have been interviewees and interviewers.

#### Debrief the lesson

1. Identify something you were surprised to learn today?
2. Have you seen the lying behaviors in someone being dishonest?
3. For those who were assigned to lie in the activity, did you notice yourself demonstrating any of the lie behaviors?
4. How will you use this information in the future?