

THE GLOBAL TEEN ZINE

# SAFE SECURE AND SMART



TRANSITION  
CENTER  
COMICS

LIMITED EDITION  
ISSUE # 4



THIS ZINE BELONGS TO

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WRITE YOUR NAME HERE





This magazine was produced by the Transition Center at the Department of State's Foreign Service Institute, with creative assistance and design from the EX/Digital Learning Division.





## MEET EMILY!



Emily is new to foreign service life. Her family arrived at post recently, and she is starting to make friends at school.




## MEET TYLER!

Tyler has lived overseas for most of his life. He feels pretty experienced, but he also knows that every post is different.



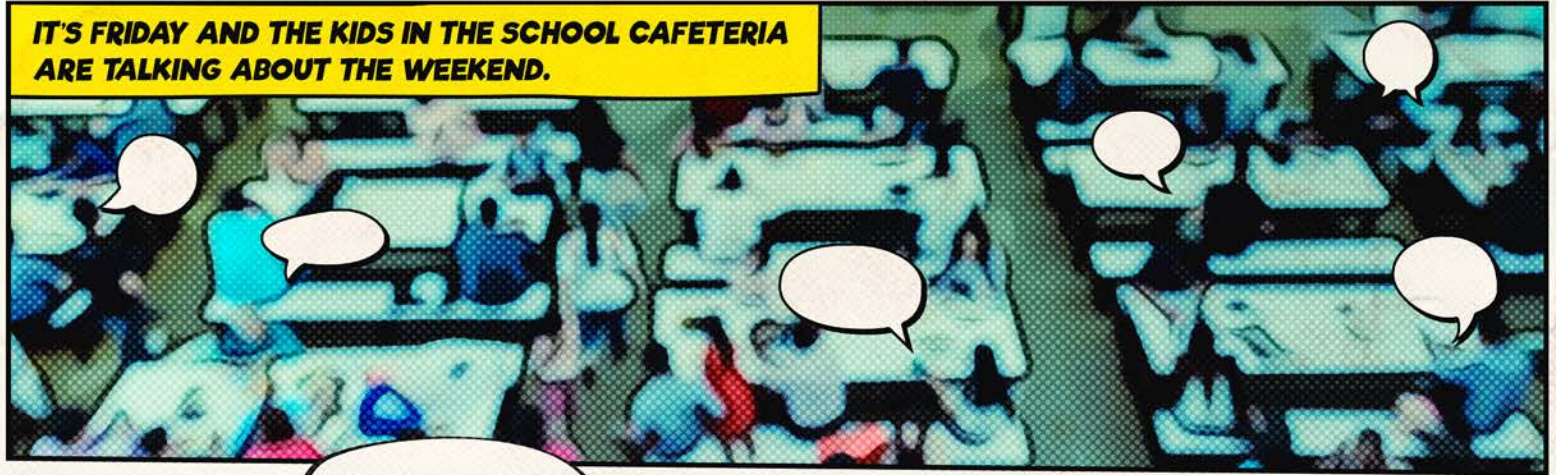
## MEET ANNA!



Anna's family arrived at post a year ago. School has been going well for Anna, and she has made some close friends.



**IT'S FRIDAY AND THE KIDS IN THE SCHOOL CAFETERIA ARE TALKING ABOUT THE WEEKEND.**



Hey, isn't Jake's party tonight?

Yeah, it's gonna be wild!



Em, you're coming, right?



Um, I haven't decided yet.



What's there to decide, Em? It's gonna be a blast!

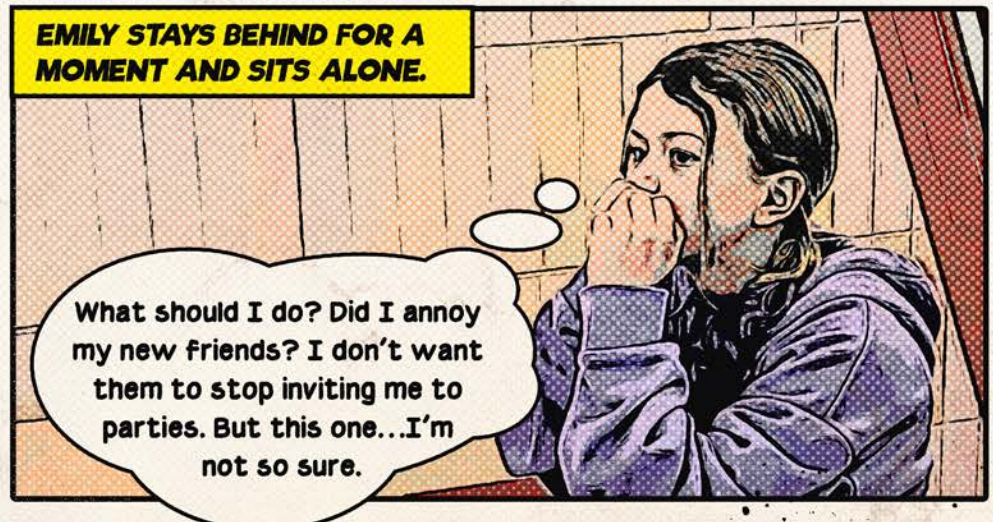
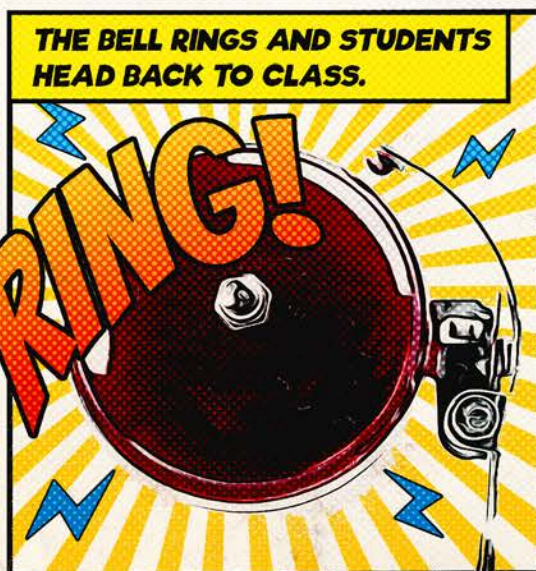


I know, but... I'm not so sure about some of Jake's friends.



What aren't you sure about?







Whenever you're faced with a tough decision it's a good idea to...

# PAUSE

You probably don't need to make that decision right away. Here are a few things you can do:

- Take a breath.
- Consider your options.
- Talk to someone.

Now let's think about Emily and the choice that she has to make. One thing Emily could do is make a "pros and cons" list. That's when you think about or write down reasons to do something—and reasons not to do something.



I want to hang out with my new friends...

I don't want people to think I'm scared...

But it will probably be a lot of fun...

I'm not sure about some of these people, though...

I don't want to feel pressured...

It might be awkward...

## "Pros" (Reasons to Go)

Be with friends!  
Have fun!  
Feel a little adventurous!

## "Cons" (Reasons Not to Go)

I'm not sure about these people.  
I may feel pressured to do something.  
**THIS JUST DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT!**



**EARLY THAT EVENING, EMILY CALLS HER FRIEND ON THE PHONE.**



Hey, about that party tonight?

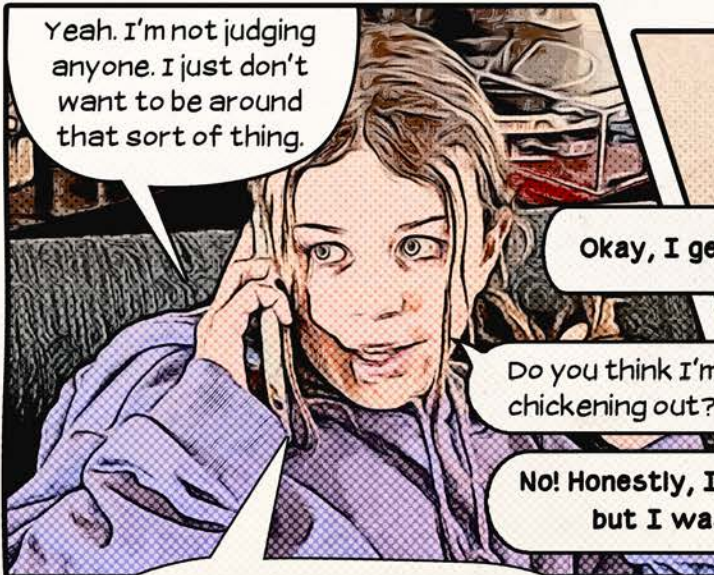
Yeah, what about it?



I'm just not up for it.



Because of what might go on there?



Yeah. I'm not judging anyone. I just don't want to be around that sort of thing.

Okay, I get that.

Do you think I'm chickening out?

No! Honestly, I feel the same way, but I was afraid to speak up!



Glad I'm not alone! So, I was thinking...if we skip the party, that doesn't mean we have to stay home, right? What if we go see a movie?







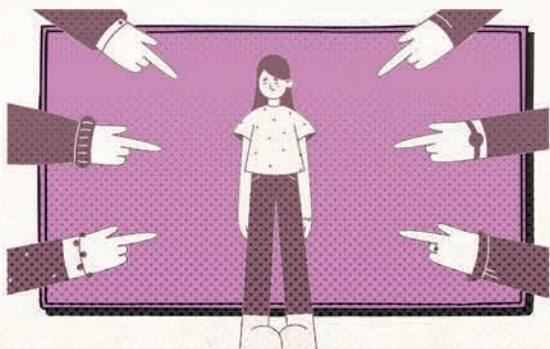
# STOP AND THINK!

If you are in middle school or high school, you probably have noticed that parties and social gatherings are pretty different than they were just a few years ago. You're getting older, which can mean more freedom...but it also means more responsibility. If you find yourself in a similar situation as Emily, ask yourself:



## DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE RISKS?

There's more to this than just "getting in trouble." Being around drugs and alcohol—especially at a young age—can be risky for your health and safety...and can get you in a lot of trouble!



## ARE YOU FEELING PEER PRESSURE?

True friends won't try to get you to do something you don't want to do. Don't be afraid to say no!



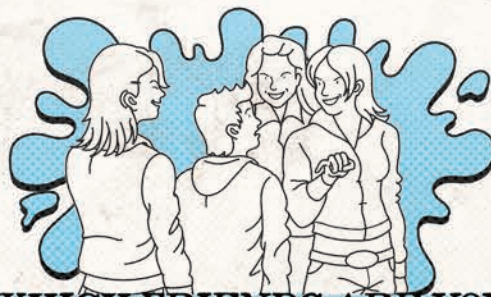
## DO YOU TRUST YOUR GUT?

Sometimes your own instincts are your best guide. If something just doesn't feel right, it's probably best to avoid it. Trust your gut...and speak up!



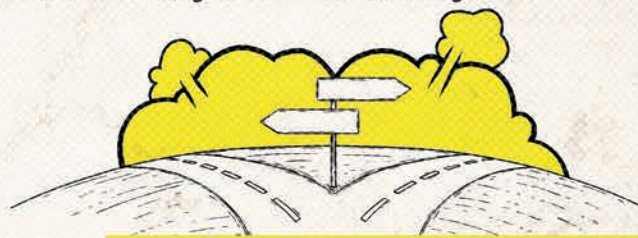
## DID YOU TALK TO YOUR PARENTS?

Yes, you want to feel grown up and be independent. But look at it this way: you can build up trust by letting your parents know where you're going and who you will be with. And proving that you can make good decisions can lead to more opportunities to do fun things!



## WHICH FRIENDS ARE YOUR REAL FRIENDS?

There's a big difference between being part of a "friend group" and knowing which friends you really connect with. Real friends don't just share your interests—they also care about you.



## HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT ALTERNATE PATHS?

People often make tough decisions even tougher by forgetting to consider other options. Remember that you don't need to follow the crowd to have a good time.



**THE PARTY IS WRAPPING UP. TYLER WAITS FOR HIS RIDE WITH TWO OTHER BOYS.**



**THAT WAS EPIC!**



It was alright. I don't know about some of those guys, though.



Are you kidding? Well, whatever. I had a good time. Hey, here's my ride.



**LATER!**



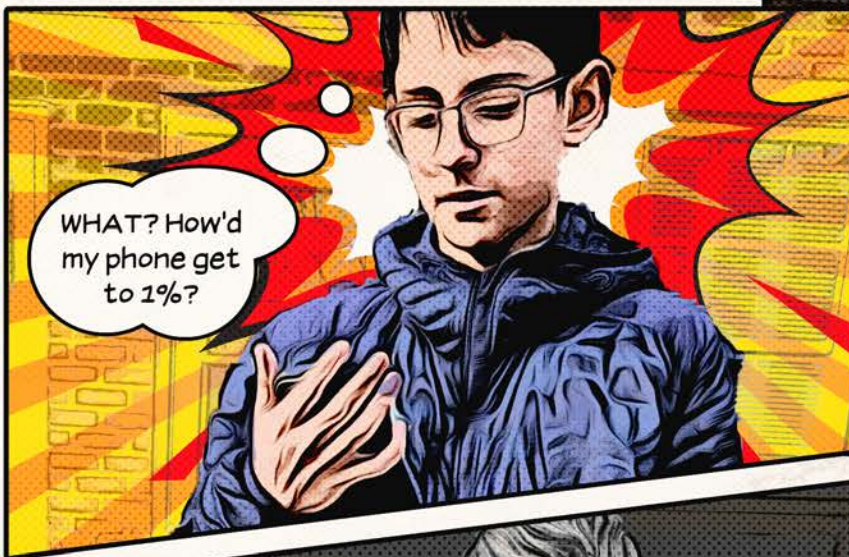
I know what you mean. It was fun, but some of those guys seemed kind of sketchy.









No thanks. My dad should be here any minute.








No thanks, I'm waiting for my dad.




Your dad works at the embassy, right?


He hired me to drive you home. He had to go into the embassy for an emergency.



My parents have never sent someone to pick me up before. But I know they use ride-share services all the time...



It's cold out there, buddy. Why don't you hop in?



Umm.....

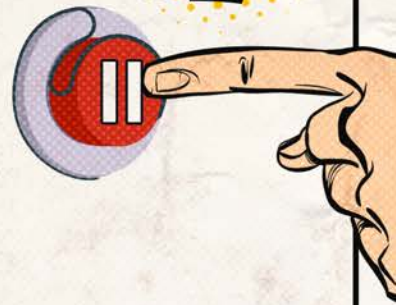


When a situation doesn't feel right, it can help to...

**PAUSE**



Earlier, we talked about “trusting your gut.” Let’s take a closer look at that.



A “gut feeling” comes from inside. It might be more like a feeling than a thought. You may not be exactly sure why something doesn’t feel right...but it just doesn’t. That’s why we call it your “gut”...it might be more like a bad feeling in your stomach instead of a worrying thought in your brain.

**Tyler has a bad feeling about this situation. How should he handle it?**

This can be tricky.

Let’s imagine that the driver really is a bad person and is going to put Tyler in danger. It might actually make things worse if Tyler tells him exactly what he is thinking. Then, he will have upset a dangerous person, and who knows what might happen next?



**Being polite is great, except...**

Don’t be a pushover!

It’s important to be kind and treat everyone with respect. However, there can be dangerous situations where someone takes advantage of your kindness.

Tyler definitely should NOT go along with this just because he is a nice, trusting kid, and it may feel awkward to say no.



**So, what should he do?**

Every situation is different. If Tyler was on a crowded street, he could try to call attention to the situation, or maybe look for a police officer or someone else who could help.



**But Tyler is alone.**

The best thing would be for Tyler to find a way to quickly remove himself from the situation.

In other words: get out of there and go somewhere safe.







I left something in my friend's house. I better go get it.



**KNOCK!**



Hey you're back. Did your dad come? I'm still waiting for my dad too.



While I was waiting for my dad, this car pulled up. The driver said my dad sent him.

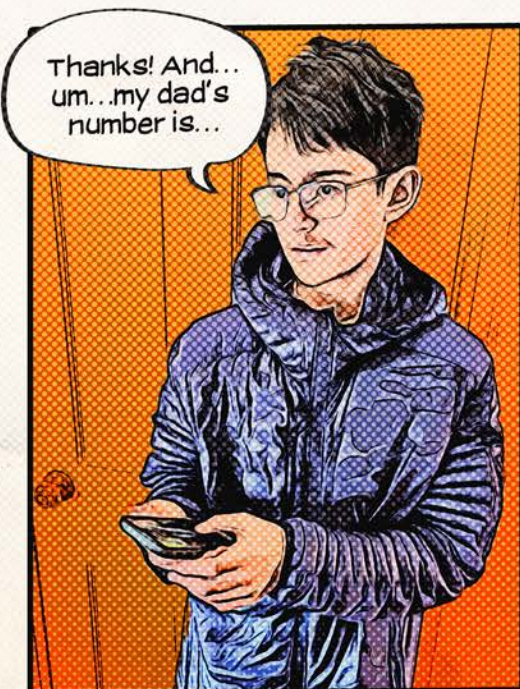


Did your dad tell you he was going to do that?

No! And my phone's dead; otherwise I'd call him.









Hello?

Dad! It's me. I'm borrowing my friend's phone. Mine died.

I guess that explains why you didn't answer my texts.

I'm running a bit late, but I should be there in five minutes.

So you didn't send anyone to pick me up?

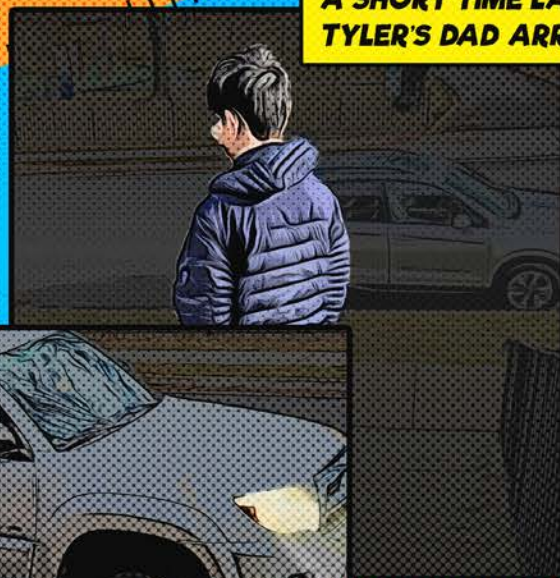
What? No. Why are you asking?

I'll explain when you get here.

Okay, you sound a bit shaken up, buddy. Make sure you stay inside until I get there.



**A SHORT TIME LATER,  
TYLER'S DAD ARRIVES.**







# TURN BACK THE CLOCK



REWIND

- LET'S PRETEND WE CAN PAUSE AND REWIND TYLER'S STORY AND MAKE SOME CHANGES -

## KEEP YOUR PHONE CHARGED!



**JUST THINK:** IF TYLER'S PHONE HADN'T DIED

- ⌚ He could have called or texted his dad to ask: When will you be here?
- ⌚ He would have received his dad's texts saying he'd be late.
- ⌚ He would have been able to check and see if the other driver was telling the truth.

## KNOW YOUR NUMBERS!



**JUST THINK:** HOW MANY IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS HAVE YOU MEMORIZED?

- ⌚ It's great that Tyler eventually remembered his dad's phone number. If he hadn't, there could have been more confusion.
- ⌚ Maybe Tyler could have given his dad his friend's phone number or the number of his friend's parent.

## WAIT INSIDE, IF YOU CAN!



**JUST THINK:** IS THERE ANY REASON WHY YOU CAN'T BE INSIDE WHILE YOU WAIT TO BE PICKED UP?

- ⌚ Waiting outside as a group may feel safe—but if you are being picked up one by one, then someone will be last and alone.
- ⌚ The person picking you up can park and come get you from inside, honk the horn to alert you to come outside, or call you when they have arrived.



# STAY SMART, STAY SAFE

**Follow These Tips to Avoid Danger**



## **Keep the Doors Locked**

Keep the doors to your home locked. Do not unlock the door for a stranger or let a stranger in without your parents' approval.



## **Package and Mail Safety**

Don't accept packages from people you don't know, and don't open the door to sign for a package without your parents' approval. Very young children should not open mail or packages.



## **Ride Smart**

Never get into someone's car without your parents' permission. If taking a ride-share car or a taxi without your parents, call your parents from the car and let them know where you are.



## **Doorway Decisions**

Don't go into anyone's house without your parents' permission. If you are visiting a friend's house, make sure that you and your parents know the address.



## **Defend Your Data**

When talking on the phone, don't give out personal information, even if you are talking to a friend. This means things like: if a family member is away, if you have any travel plans, where your parents work, or school and after-school routines.



*Following simple safety rules like these help keep you safe while having fun...it can also help you earn the trust of your parents.*



**A FEW DAYS AFTER THE PARTY, ANNA RECEIVED A TEXT FROM HER FRIEND TRACY.**

I don't know what to do.

I guess I did something embarrassing at the party.

Someone took pictures of me.  
Now I'm getting these awful texts.

Most of these are mean, but some of these people are actually threatening me.

I'm sorry you're going through this. We'll figure it out. OK?

Have you told your parents?

ARE YOU KIDDING? I WOULD BE IN SO MUCH TROUBLE!

**IT'S SO EMBARRASSING!**

**WILL THEY EVER TRUST ME AGAIN?**

**I MESSED UP!**

**WILL THEY TAKE AWAY MY PHONE?**

**I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'LL SAY!**

**WILL THEY EVER LET ME GO TO ANY PARTIES AGAIN?**



They'll never let me go out again.

...

This will upset my parents

...

Because of their jobs,  
you know?

**ANNA CONSIDERS WHAT TO DO. SHE WANTS TO HELP TRACY, BUT SHE'S NOT SURE HOW.**



If I tell my parents, then everyone's going to get involved. Everyone at the party...all their parents will know what went on.



**TRACY AND ANNA STOP TEXTING AND GET READY FOR SCHOOL.**



**ALL DAY AT SCHOOL, ANNA WONDERS IF PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT HER FRIEND...**



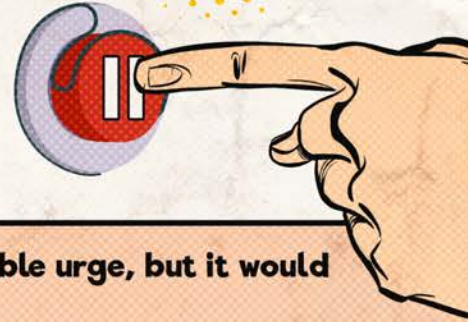
**SHE CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT IT. SHE WANTS TO HELP HER FRIEND, BUT SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO...**



# When you are stuck in a problem it can help to...

# PAUSE

Anna isn't sure about the best way to help her friend, so she takes some time to think it through.



What if we...  
fight back?



**That's an understandable urge, but it would be a mistake.**

The people harassing Tracy aren't "playing nice." Doing something to upset them won't make the situation better.

Okay, but what if we...  
embrace it?



**Not the best idea.**

There are times when "embracing" or "owning" it can be helpful. If you trip and fall, it's okay to laugh at yourself. However, this problem is more serious than just being a little embarrassed.

Maybe we can...  
ignore it?



**Sadly, no.**

There will be times when someone is trying to annoy you, and you can make them stop by ignoring them. However, photos on the internet don't go away. Ignoring the issue isn't the best choice.

I think we need to...  
tell our parents  
about it.



**This is the right call, even if it feels difficult.**

Even though Tracy feels embarrassed and maybe worries about getting in trouble, her parents will be on her side. Telling them is the right thing to do.





**THAT NIGHT, ALONE IN HER BEDROOM, ANNA TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND MAKES A DECISION.**



Hello?

Tracy, I've thought about it, and I think I know what we need to do...



Okay... what?



I know you are embarrassed, but the people harassing you need to be stopped. I know it's hard, but you need to talk to someone.

But I can't!



I would be scared too. But it doesn't sound like this problem is going to go away on its own.

You think I should tell my parents?

Yes. I think you need to... before it gets worse...

**TRACY IS SILENT FOR A WHILE AND THEN FINALLY SAYS...**



...I think you're right.



If you want, I can be there when you talk to your parents, if you think that will help.

Even if they get upset, they'll be on your side.



Wow, you'd really do that?



Of course!

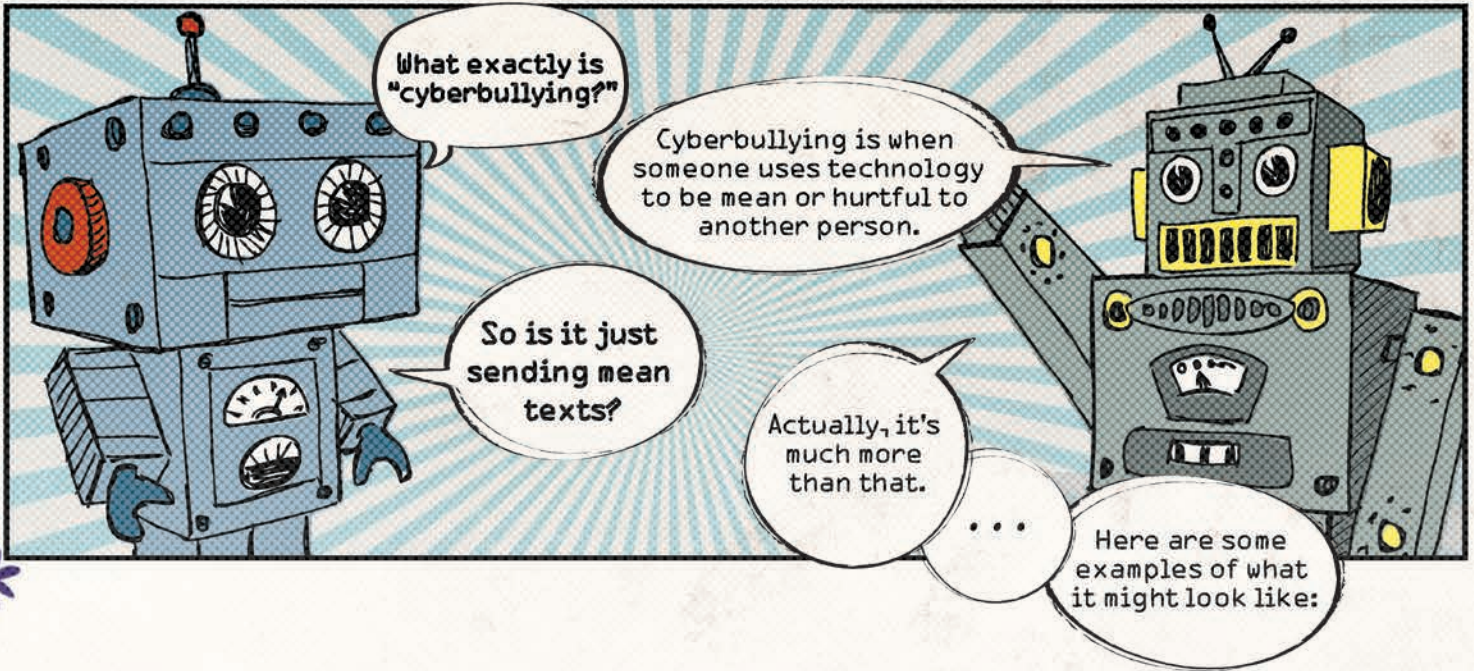


Wow! Well, thanks, I feel so much better knowing that you have my back.



# THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT CYBERBULLYING

@



## TEXT MESSAGES

*Sending mean or threatening messages to someone's phone.*



## SOCIAL MEDIA

*Posting hurtful comments on someone's profile or sharing embarrassing photos or videos.*



## ONLINE GAMES

*Teaming up to exclude or bully someone during online games.*



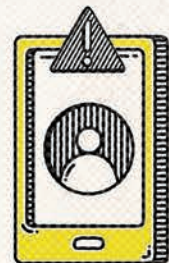
## EMAIL

*Sending rude or harassing emails to someone.*



## CHAT APPS

*Using chat apps to spread rumors or gossip about someone.*



## FAKE ACCOUNTS

*Creating fake accounts to impersonate someone or spread lies about them.*



# Ways You Can Put a **STOP** to Cyberbullying

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW ARE GETTING CYBERBULLIED, HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD DO:



## GET THE EVIDENCE

Save a copy of the message or content so you can share it with an adult.



## BLOCK THE BULLY

Block the phone number or account of the person who is doing the bullying.



## LOG OFF

Step away from the online world for a while, and be sure to leave the site where the cyberbullying is taking place.



## TALK TO SOMEONE YOU TRUST

You will need to tell your parents about what happened. However, if you are feeling anxious, it may help to talk to a trusted friend for support.



# Emergency One-Sheet

Talk to your parents and fill out the important emergency information on this page. Then, cut the sheet out and stick it on the fridge—or take a photo of it with your phone (or both!).



## PHONE NUMBERS

Parents' cell phones

Parents' work phones

Home landline

Local emergency numbers

Post One number

Trusted adult friend



## TWO-WAY RADIO

Where is your radio located?

What is your Post One's call sign?

What is your radio call sign?

☐ Check the box to indicate that you know how to operate the radio.



## FAMILY EMERGENCY

How will you exit the house in an emergency?

Where will you meet up if you have to leave the house?

What should you take with you?



## EMERGENCY ALARM

Where is your alarm system keypad located?

What is your emergency alarm code? DON'T WRITE IT HERE, but talk to a trusted adult about this and keep that code a secret.

☐ Check the box to indicate that you know the emergency alarm code.



# NOTES



# LOOK FOR MORE!

WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED THIS ZINE. LOOK FOR OTHER ZINES COVERING THE TOPICS OF TRANSITIONS, IDENTITY, ACCEPTING DIFFERENCES, AND MORE!

YOU CAN FIND DIGITAL COPIES OF THESE ZINES—ONLINE AT:

<https://www.state.gov/fsitc-publications-and-online-resources>

ARE THERE ANY OTHER TOPICS YOU WANT TO READ ABOUT?

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! WRITE US AT:

[FSITransitionCenter@state.gov](mailto:FSITransitionCenter@state.gov)

The Foreign Service Institute thanks the Una Chapman Cox Foundation for making this project possible.







