What's my role?

TEENS

Our online presence is constantly growing – even when we're not actually online. Being online allows us to do lots of things, including connecting with others, learning about different issues and getting help with our school work. While being online can be exciting, it can also have downsides. Cyberbullying and online predators are problems that touch people around you every day. No one is immune.

Being online has its responsibilities, too. Everyone, including you, has a right to be safe while online. As a teen, what's your role when it comes to keeping yourself and others safe online?

The following are some examples of things you can do to make sure you can stay safe both online and offline:

- **Get informed:** I will learn more about cyberbullying so I can be aware of what I and my friends can look out for and what to do about it.
- **Spread the word:** I will talk to others, like my friends, about cyberbullying.
- **Talk about it:** I will talk to my parents or another adult that I trust if I'm ever cyberbullied, feel unsafe or even if something just doesn't feel "right".
- **Be careful:** I will think before I share personal information (such as where I live or pictures of myself). The more personal information I share, the more easily predators and others can hurt me.
- **Exercise caution:** I will not respond to any type of message that makes me feel unsafe or uneasy. I will tell an adult I trust about these kinds of messages right away.
- **Don't engage:** I will not immediately respond to messages that hurt or upset me. I will walk away, calm down, talk it over with a friend or an adult and then decide whether or not to respond.
- **Don't rush:** I will review my messages before I send them to make sure they really reflect what I want to say.
- **Know when to disconnect:** I will realize that sometimes there are certain conversations that should happen face-to-face to make sure that words and emotions are interpreted correctly (for example: when my best friend tells me they're mad at me).
- **Don't be part of the problem:** I will not participate in any online activity that hurts other people. For example: I will not join a Facebook group that is about hating someone.

What are some other things that you can do in order to stay safe online?

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