

BRO!



# HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS FOR TEENS



Big Brothers  
Big Sisters.





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**YES**

**THIS WORKBOOK BELONGS TO**

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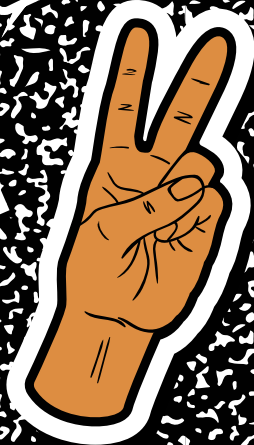
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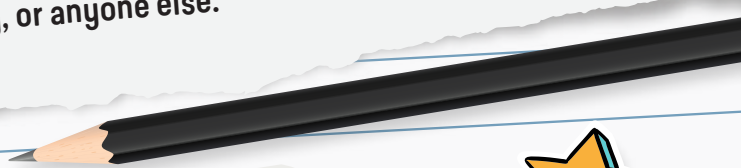



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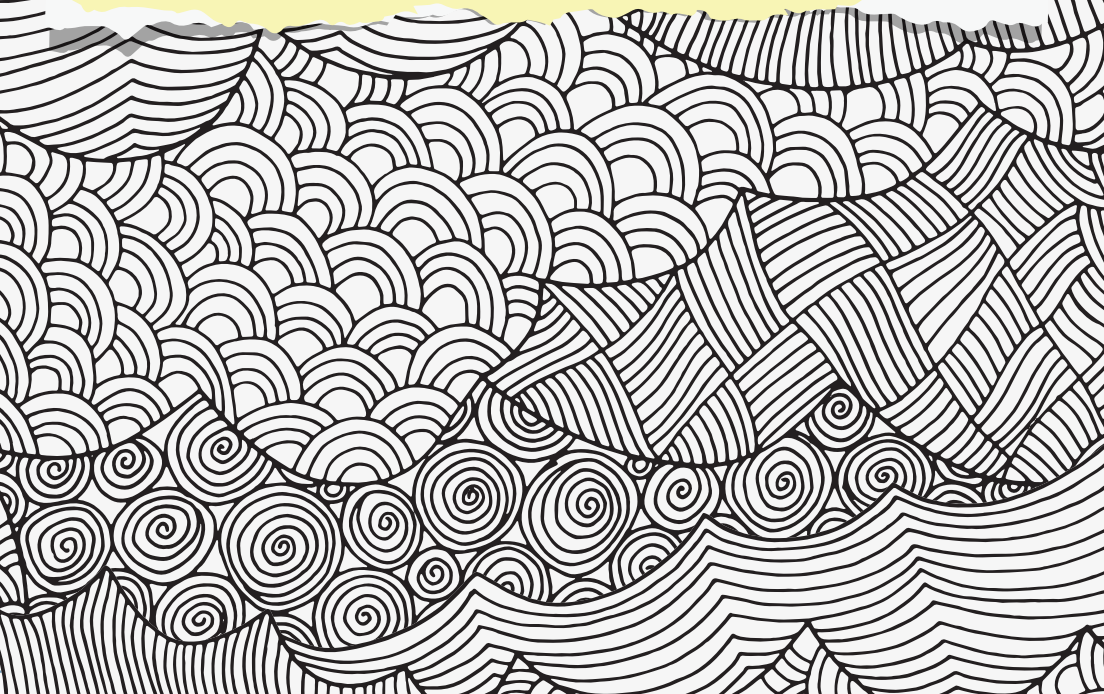


# At Big Brothers Big Sisters

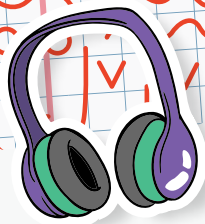
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- ▶ We believe that all children and youth deserve to live in a world where they feel cared for and protected.
  - ▶ We believe you have the right to feel safe. This includes when you are with your Big, your friends, your teachers, your family, or anyone else.



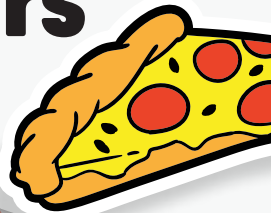
✧ As you get older and do more things on your own, you might find you have trouble talking to the adults in your life about things that matter. Although you can handle lots of situations yourself, there are times when you still might benefit from the help of a trusted adult.







# About Big Brothers Big Sisters



Your relationship with your Big may be a new kind of relationship for you. We will work with you and your parent to help make sure this relationship is healthy and positive. You can also talk to Big Brothers Big Sisters staff about any questions you have.

We know that kids your age may be dealing with serious or even harmful situations. In this book, we'll talk about some of those issues and ways you may be able to handle them. We will also provide you with resources to help you learn more about these topics.

It's important that you know it is an adult's responsibility to make sure you are safe at all times, but there are also things that you can do that may help you stay safe.





HEALTHY

## You should expect

your relationship with your Big and other caring adults to be healthy. Over time, we hope that your Big will become a trusted adult in your life. Our staff are here to help make sure that everything is working out. If you find that your relationship with your Big does NOT feel healthy or safe, you can always call your Big Brothers Big Sisters staff.

YES

**Healthy relationships** can help you feel happy, cared for, and looked after. **Unhealthy relationships** may make you feel sad, unhappy, angry, and unsafe. Here are some things that help build healthy relationships:

Respect

Handling Disagreements

Setting Boundaries

Letting You Be Yourself

Understanding Consent

Feeling Safe from Harm



LET'S TALK ABOUT WHAT EACH OF THESE MEANS...





# RESPECT

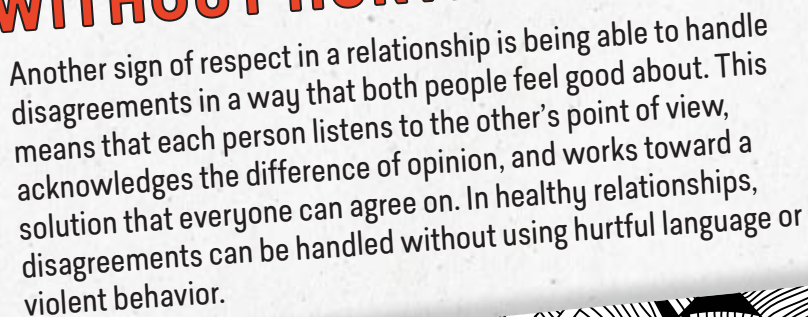
Signs of respect include honesty, trust, honoring each other's boundaries, and communication where both people really listen to each other. Listening to one another can include taking other people's thoughts and feelings into consideration and having discussions before making decisions. When issues come up in a respectful relationship, problems are solved together, without harmful language or behaviors.

Another way people can show respect in relationships is by respecting important people in your life, such as friends and family members, and encouraging you to spend time with them.


Signs of disrespect might include behaving in mean or bullying ways, name-calling, being rude, or other harmful behavior.



## HANDLING DISAGREEMENTS WITHOUT HURTING ANYONE



Another sign of respect in a relationship is being able to handle disagreements in a way that both people feel good about. This means that each person listens to the other's point of view, acknowledges the difference of opinion, and works toward a solution that everyone can agree on. In healthy relationships, disagreements can be handled without using hurtful language or violent behavior.





# SETTING BOUNDARIES

**Boundaries** are limits we set that let others know what is okay and not okay to say and do to us. When you set clear boundaries, it's easier to tell someone when they've crossed a line that is not okay with you. It's equally important to recognize other people's boundaries too. Keep in mind, other people's comfort zones or boundaries might be different than yours, and it's important to respect their limits.

Everyone has a right to set emotional and physical boundaries for themselves. Because a lot of interaction takes place online, it's also a good idea to have clear digital boundaries in place.

\* **An example of a physical boundary** is how close you stand when talking to someone else. You may have noticed that other people sometimes stand closer or further away than you do. Sometimes you might find that you feel uncomfortable if someone gets too close. And that's ok. This type of physical boundary is different for everyone.

\* **An example of an emotional boundary** might be the use of a nickname. While it may be okay for your family to call you by a nickname you've had since you were little, it might make you mad for someone outside the family to use the same name.

\* **An example of a digital boundary** is being okay with texting your significant other a few times every day but letting them know you don't want to get multiple texts each hour.

## Boundaries might be different for different people!

Overall, it's important to remember that boundaries are put in place to help you feel safe. In healthy relationships, boundaries are respected ALL THE TIME.



# LETTING YOU BE YOURSELF (AND ACT YOUR AGE)

In healthy relationships, you feel like you can be your awesome self! You can be open about your likes and dislikes, and the people around you don't try to change you. You are also able to act your age, which means that you don't have to pretend to be older or want to do things just because adults or older teens are doing them.

## UNDERSTANDING CONSENT

\* **Consent is** an important part of any healthy relationship. Consent is just another word for permission, and it comes up in every type of relationship. For example, if you have a cute picture of you and a friend, and you ask if they're okay with you posting it before you put it on social media, you are getting their consent.

\* **Consent is not** just about being nice. By asking for consent, you are allowing the people you care about to enforce boundaries that feel good to them, and you are showing that you respect them.



**Consent** can be about little, everyday things, but it can also be about big things, like showing affection in dating relationships. In relationships, both people need to consent to any physical or sexual contact. That means that both people are 100% free to make any choice that feels right to them, and when they make that choice, they are not in any way bullied, pressured, or threatened to change their mind. Like boundaries, consent can change over time. Just because you consent to kissing one day, doesn't mean you have to consent to kissing any other time.



# FEELING SAFE FROM HARM

**A big part of a healthy relationship is feeling safe from harm. This includes physical, emotional, and sexual harm.**

We've talked about some of these ideas already, let's review them. Being free from physical harm in a relationship means that neither you or any person in the relationship uses violence or aggression to express themselves or to solve problems. Keeping yourself safe from physical harm also means respecting your body, which includes not using drugs or alcohol or getting into a car with someone who has been drinking or using drugs. This means ignoring pressure from others to do things that make you feel uncomfortable, you believe are wrong, or could hurt you. This also means not pressuring others to do these type of things.

**How do you think you would respond if someone tried to get you to do something you felt was wrong or made you feel uncomfortable?**



# FREE FROM EMOTIONAL HARM

Feeling safe from emotional harm in relationships means using respectful language and not calling each other names or putting each other down.

**Bullying** is an example of someone behaving in a way that makes others feel emotionally unsafe. Posting negative information or pictures of someone else online is also a type of bullying, called "**cyberbullying**," and is another way of causing emotional harm.



Insulting or making fun of someone else because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation not only causes emotional harm but can also be **considered harassment**.

- \* Have you or anyone you know ever been bullied or harassed?
- \* How did that make you feel?
- \* How do you think they felt?




# FREE FROM SEXUAL HARM

✗ When it comes to physical or sexual behavior between two teens or two adults, **feeling safe** from sexual harm in a relationship means asking for and giving consent **BEFORE** engaging in physical or sexual behaviors. This includes not trying to trick, pressure, or force anyone into sexual activities, on or offline. If someone tries to get you to participate in unwanted sexual activities, you have the right to refuse.

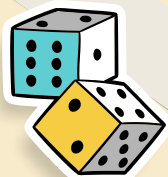
✗ There are some situations that make consent impossible. If one person is intoxicated – they can't consent. If one youth is older than the other or if someone has a disability, consent may not be possible.

✗ Adults like coaches, faith leaders, counselors, and teachers, for example, have more power and authority over teens, which is part of the reason why consent is not possible between adults and teens.

## REMEMBER:

 **\* ANY SEXUAL ACTIVITY BETWEEN AN ADULT AND CHILDREN OR YOUTH IS NOT OKAY**, even if the youth believes it was their choice. It is an adult's responsibility to keep children and youth safe. Sexual activity between an adult and a child or youth is never okay and if it does happen...

**\* IT IS NEVER THE YOUTH'S FAULT.** If someone tries to get you to participate in unwanted sexual activities, you have the right to refuse.



If an adult tried to get you to do something sexual, what could you do? ✓

What if they were a really important person in your life?

Who could you talk to? ✓

# IN-PERSON AND ONLINE RELATIONSHIPS

You likely have relationships that are in-person and others that are only online. In both kinds of relationships, it is important to look for signs that the relationship is healthy. Some things that make up healthy relationships are respect, setting boundaries, being yourself, listening, understanding consent, handling disagreements in a safe way, and feeling safe from harm.

**What might be a way that someone shows you respect in an online relationship?**

While in-person and online relationships have some things in common, there are differences too. Technology can sometimes make it easier to say things we would never say face to face. Some people may find it easier to pick on others online, which can turn into cyberbullying. **When interacting online, it's important to remember:**

- \* You are talking to real people with thoughts and feelings
- \* You should show them the same respect you would if they were in the same room

**What are some differences (good/bad/confusing) between in-person and online relationships?**





# RESPONDING TO UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

We expect your relationship with your Big to be safe and healthy. But it's important to know there are steps you can take if you feel uncomfortable or unsafe in your relationship with your Big or anyone else in your life.

Have you ever been around someone who made you feel unsafe? If that's happened to you, how did you handle it? If that happened to someone you know, how could you support them?

What if you or your friend was in an unhealthy relationship, or one that's missing some of the key ingredients to a healthy relationship? What could you do?

## BYSTANDERS AND UPSTANDERS

A Bystander is someone who sees something happening, like bullying, but isn't directly involved. An Upstander is someone who sees or hears about bullying and takes action to help. Upstanders feel that it is their responsibility to speak up or do what they can to help others.

**Think about it...**if you knew someone was being bullied, harassed or abused, wouldn't you want others who knew about it to help? If you saw someone being pushed or kicked at school, what could you do? If a friend told you they were upset because an adult yelled at them, what could you do?

**Before you do anything,** make sure that you are safe. You can't help anyone else if you aren't safe first. If you don't feel safe, wait until you are in a safe place before you say or do something.

**If it's safe for you to do something,** speak up and tell the person doing it to "stop," or "it's not funny," or get help from an adult. Support the person being harmed and ask what you can do to help. Think of an adult you trust and talk to them about the situation.

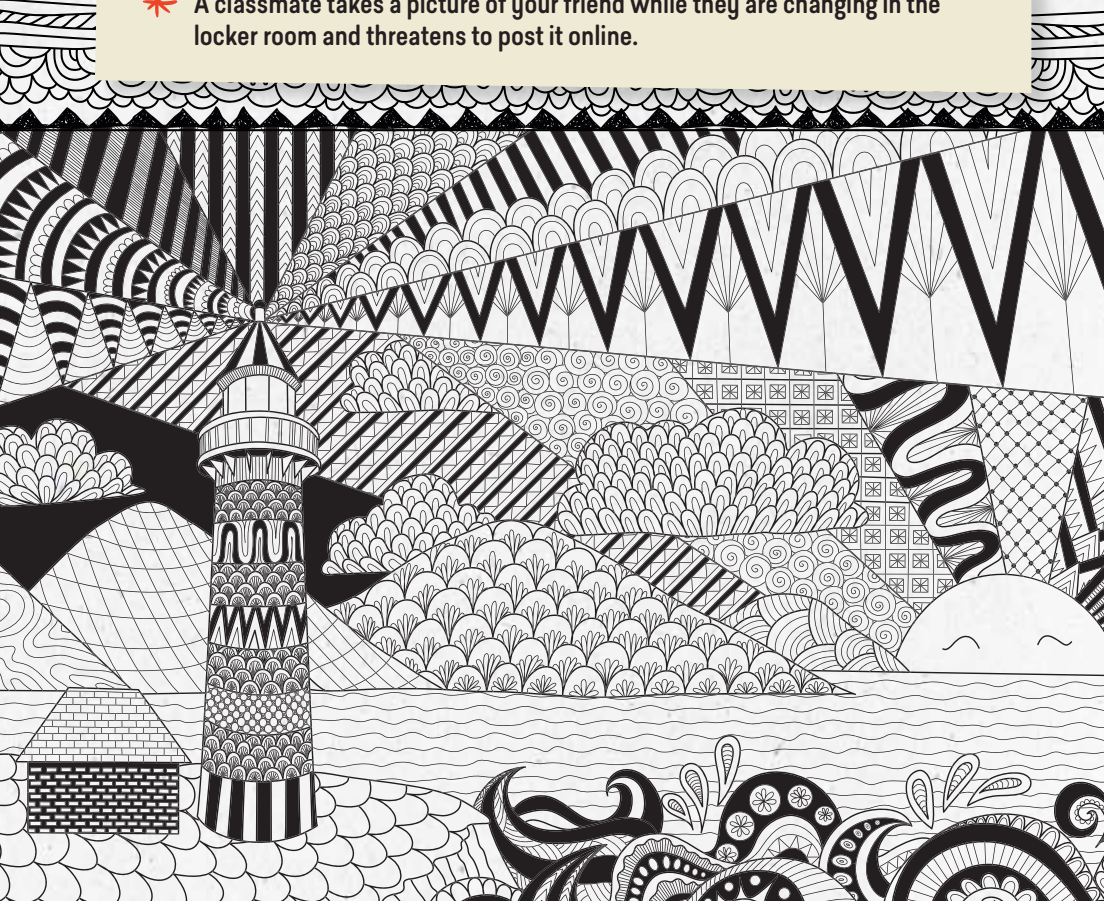
**If you felt unsafe, list the names of people you could go to for help.**

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**DISCUSS WITH A TRUSTED ADULT WHAT YOU  
WOULD DO IN THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS:**

- \* An important adult in your life makes you feel uncomfortable because of the way they touch you or want you to touch them.
- \* You see an adult that you really like trying to touch kids in a sexual way. The adult tries to make it seem like it was the kids' fault.
- \* Every time your neighbor drives you to school you feel unsafe because she smells like alcohol and drives in a way that scares you.
- \* A student at your school bullies a friend that comes out as gay.
- \* You are online and find out that someone has posted information or pictures of you that are embarrassing or were supposed to be private.
- \* A classmate takes a picture of your friend while they are changing in the locker room and threatens to post it online.





# INTERNET TIPS FOR TEENS

Below is a sample pledge to help you think about making good decisions online.

## I WILL THINK BEFORE I POST

I agree not to post information and images that could put me at risk, embarrass me, or damage my future. This includes:

- \* Cell and home phone numbers
- \* My home address
- \* Sexual messages
- \* Inappropriate pictures and videos



## I WILL RESPECT OTHER PEOPLE ONLINE

I will not:

- \* Post anything rude, offensive, or threatening
- \* Send or forward images and information that might embarrass, hurt, or harass someone
- \* Take anyone's personal information and use it to damage his or her reputation

## I WILL BE CAREFUL WHEN MEETING ONLINE FRIENDS IN PERSON

I agree to:

- \* Ask my parent or guardian's permission before going
- \* Have a parent or guardian accompany me
- \* Meet in a public place

## I WILL PROTECT MYSELF ONLINE

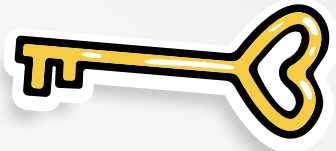
If someone makes me feel uncomfortable or if someone is rude or offensive, I will:

- \* Not respond
- \* Save the evidence
- \* Tell my parent, guardian, or another trusted adult
- \* Report to the website, cell phone company, CyberTipline.com, or the police

Adapted from Netsmartz® middle and high school internet safety rules.  
[kidsmartz.org/NetSmartz%20v3/Resources/Pledges](http://kidsmartz.org/NetSmartz%20v3/Resources/Pledges)

# FEELING SAFE

Remember, you have the right to feel safe in any relationship. We expect that your relationship with your Big will be healthy and that they can be a trusted adult when you need one.



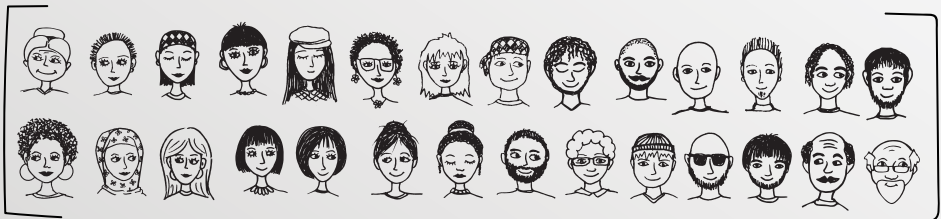
Big Brothers Big Sisters staff will call you to find out how things are going - in your life and with your Big. We want to hear about the things you and your Big do together and talk about how you're feeling about your match. You don't have to wait for us to call you. You can call us anytime you need or want to.

## BBBS Staff

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

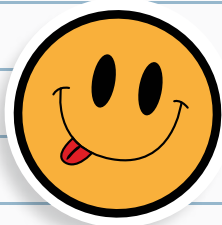
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_





# RESOURCES



If you would like to learn more about healthy relationships or if you need support in other ways, here are some websites you might find helpful.

→ <https://thatsnotcool.com/>

→ <https://pacerteensagainstbullying.org/>

→ <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/trevor-support-center/#sm.00000r4q8c11a6fftpkurucmsjvee>









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