

FAMILY GUIDE

to teen content creation

common sense networks™ in partnership with  YouTube



HELLO, FAMILIES

Today's teens are not just content consumers—they're also content creators. Creating their own videos allows teens to explore their interests, express themselves, connect with a global community, and of course HAVE FUN!

But, creating content can have its challenges. And believe it or not, teens want trusted adults to get involved, be their allies, and support them. So join them. Explore videos together, have conversations, and maybe even make a cameo in a video or two! Most importantly, empower them to take ownership of their digital lives.

This guide is designed to support you in doing just that—before, during, and after content creation. We encourage you to check it out with your teens and use the recommendations in a way that works for your family.

Together, we hope to make your teen's online world a little more positive, a whole lot safer, and way more fun!



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**BEFORE
CREATION**



BE AN ALLY: UNDERSTAND & SUPPORT

Get involved in your teen's content creation process.

Make sure your teen knows they have your support as they explore content creation.

- 1 Show (genuine) interest.**
Ask about their favorite creators and content. Better yet, watch them together!
- 2 Catch them if they stumble.**
Be there if things go wrong. Hear them out and try to understand their emotions.
- 3 Have fun with them!**
Embrace the joy, spontaneity, creativity, and connection that creating videos provides!

What do you enjoy most about the videos... laughing, learning, something else?

What kind of videos do you want to make?

Have you or your friends ever run into any issues (like gross or weird videos)?

CAN YOU HELP ME FIND A CHANNEL I'D LIKE?

It's about making sure they know they can come to you through the inevitable highs and lows in content creation.



BE INTENTIONAL: MOTIVATION & GOALS

Why create? Focusing on the right motivation.

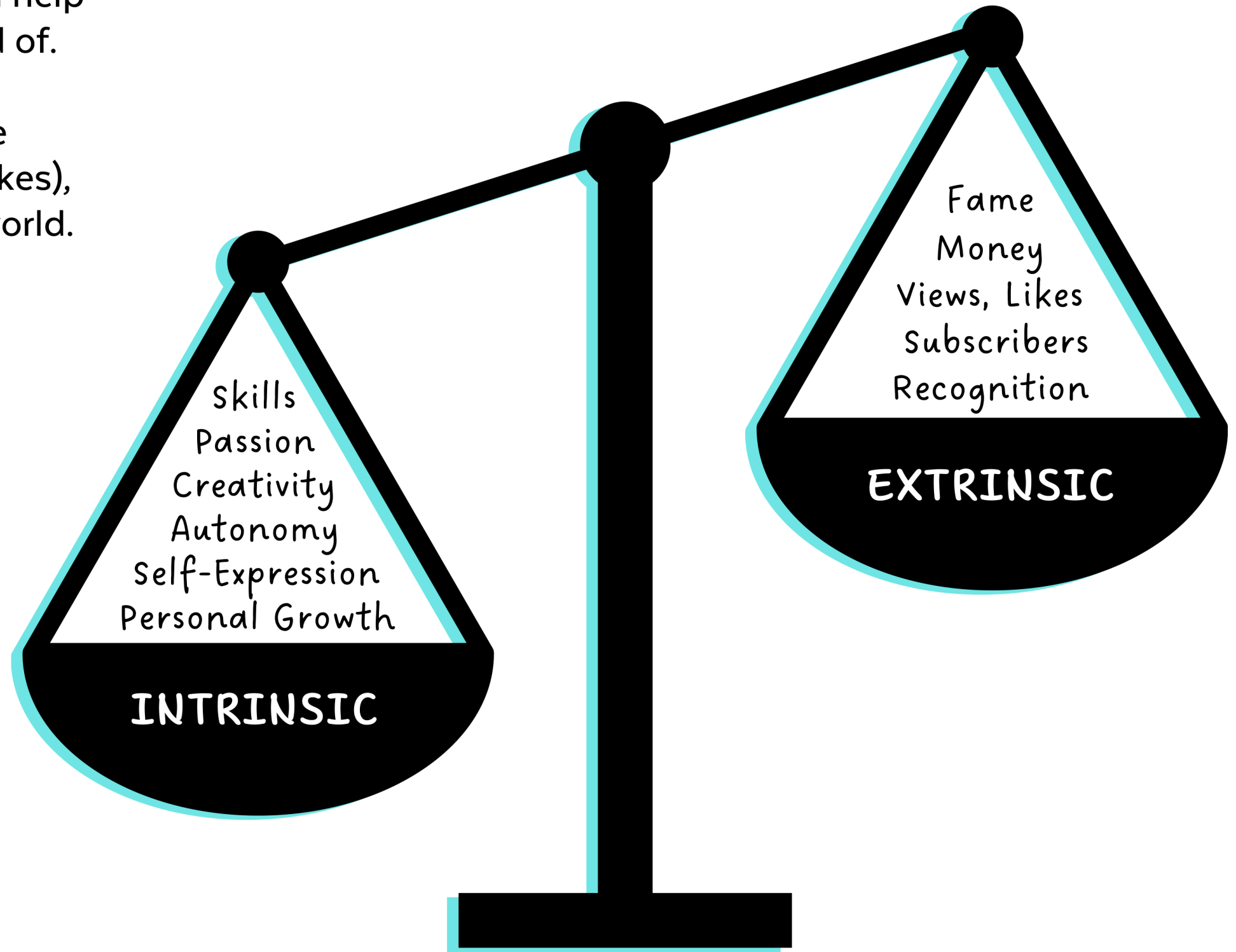
Being intentional about why and what they create can help your teen have fun and make something they're proud of.

Help them put more weight on intrinsic motivators, like creativity and self-expression (rather than views and likes), to set them up for long-term fulfillment in the online world.

HOW DO YOU WANT TO FEEL AFTER CREATING?

What topics are you passionate about?

What are you hoping to get out of this?



BE INTENTIONAL: ONLINE PERSONA

Who are they going to be out there?

Encourage your teen to show the world their authentic self and build a digital footprint they're proud of.

CREATOR GLOSSARY

Personal Brand:

The intentional identity you present to others. It's your story and the reputation you build.

Digital Footprint:

The trail of data you leave behind online. It's the record of all your actions and information.

CHECK IT OUT FOR YOURSELF

Explore an example of a personal brand

Head to a familiar figure or celebrity's social media accounts.

- How do they present themselves?
- Anything surprising? Anything you'd do differently?

Google yourselves

If your teen doesn't have much of a digital footprint yet, use your own to spark conversation!

- Are you comfortable with everything that comes up?
- What are you most proud of?
- See anything cringe-worthy?
- What else would you want to see?



CONSIDER THE RISKS: PRIVACY

Privacy is your teen's right and responsibility.

Help them **beware of the overshare** so they don't put themselves or others at risk.

Set Boundaries

- Decide what information is or isn't safe to share.
- Ask for consent before tagging or mentioning others.

Review Privacy Settings

- Avoid sharing real-time locations. Turn off geotagging.
- Update privacy settings to control where videos appear and who can watch them.

Check the Details

- Private info can be part of what you say, wear, or where you go. Check your surroundings for anything revealing.
- Consider a virtual background or blur.

And, we happen to have a handy checklist to help!



	YES	NO
We want YESes for these:		
Have I checked for private details in the background?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did I get consent from anyone I show or mention?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would I be comfortable with anyone or everyone seeing this?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We want NOs for these:		
Am I sharing anything I should keep private?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Could anything I say, show, or wear be used to identify me in real life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does this reveal my current location or future plans?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Could anyone use this info to harm me?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
It's not just about me! Could sharing this compromise the privacy of anyone else?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

WELL-BEING CHECK

Is creating content the right choice, right now?

Help your teen consider their mental state, social space, and time management.

State

Determine how their current feelings and impulses may influence their actions and emotions.

HOW WILL CREATING AFFECT YOUR MOOD?

Will you feel as strongly about sharing this tomorrow as you do right now?

Space

Consider if creating content is the best outlet to express what they're thinking or feeling in the moment.

Will you regret sharing this here?

Have you considered only sharing with the people you know?

Would reaching out to a friend make you feel better than uploading?

Time

Balance what they want and need to do, and consider if there are other things they should be prioritizing.

Will creating get in the way of the rest of your day?

How much time do you want to commit?

WRAP-UP: READY TO CREATE?

Before they start creating, keep these tips in mind.

- 1 Be an Ally**
Make sure your teen knows they have your support as they explore content creation by inviting them to share their journey with you.
- 2 Be Intentional**
Set them up for long-term fulfillment by focusing on what makes them happy, rather than aiming for views or likes. Encourage them to create an online persona that highlights their passions and that they'll be proud to show the world.
- 3 Consider the Risks**
Beware of the overshare! Help them protect their privacy by setting boundaries, reviewing privacy settings to control who's seeing their content, and limiting personal details.
- 4 Well-Being Check**
Help your teen consider their mental state, social space, and time management to decide if creating is the right choice, right now.





BE AN ALLY: STAY PRESENT

Show up, cheer them on, and make some memories.

You helped get them ready. Now it's time to stay involved as they start creating and sharing:

- 1 Co-Create**
Enjoy content creation with your teen. If they're open to it, get involved and help with their next video to make it a shared experience.
- 2 Offer Support**
Even if they don't want you in *all* their videos, you can still be there to offer help or guidance! Provide technical assistance, help brainstorm and troubleshoot, or simply be their cheerleader.
- 3 Promote Responsible Creation**
As they get going, they might need some reminders about their digital footprint, values, or safety. Make it clear you're there to help them navigate.
- 4 Create Memories**
Content isn't the only thing you can create together! Having fun while exploring their online world together can strengthen your bond and create lasting memories.



BE A GOOD DIGITAL CITIZEN

Consider the potential impact of their content on others.

Help your teen contribute to a positive online community.

Create with Empathy

Have them step into their viewers' shoes to make content that is respectful of others' feelings, needs, and challenges.

Could what I'm saying or doing offend or hurt anyone?

How might this land with different viewers who have different experiences?

Promote Inclusivity

Help them think about who their content welcomes in or who it might shut out. Avoid terms that are judgmental or stigmatizing.

Does this promote kindness, acceptance, respect?

Could anything I'm saying or showing perpetuate a stereotype?

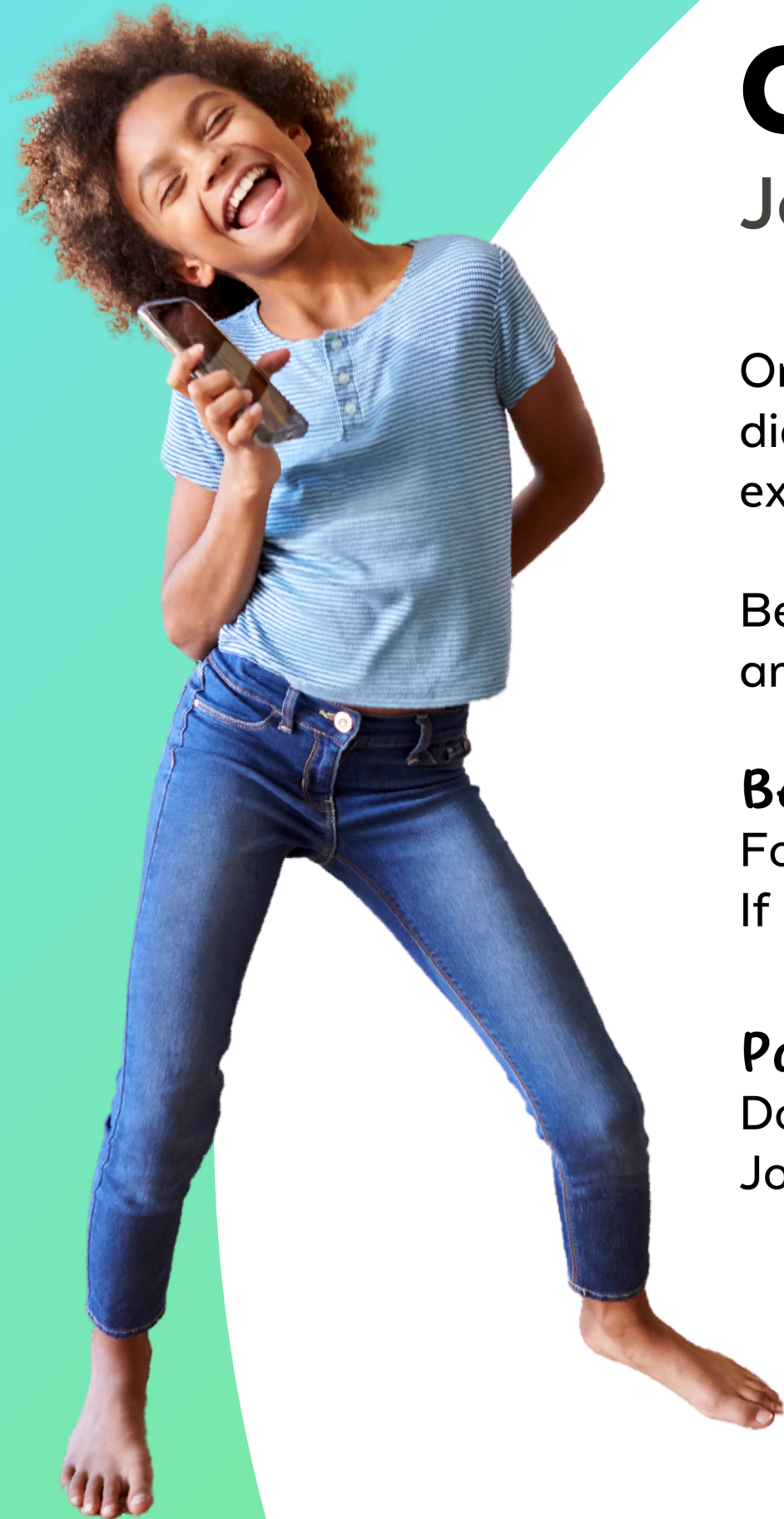
Be Aware

Make sure they know (and remember) that their content can affect anyone who sees it...in good and bad ways.

COULD THIS BE TRIGGERING? DO I NEED TO GIVE A WARNING?

Am I modeling any unhealthy or risky behaviors or thought patterns?

AM I SETTING A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EXAMPLE?



CREATE: TRENDS & CHALLENGES

Join the fun in a safe and responsible way!

Online trends have become an essential part of teen culture, shaping their digital lives in a big way. They can be a positive and fun outlet for your teen to express themselves creatively, feel connected, and showcase their talents or strengths.

Being informed and involved can help you bond, understand your teen's digital world, and keep them safe. Here's how:

Be in the Know

Follow relevant accounts, and ask about challenges your teen's interested in or has tried. If you're worried a challenge might be unsafe, talk to your teen about why.

Participate Together

Don't be shy! There's no better way to understand the hype than trying it out yourself. Join your teen in challenges that align with your family's values, and have some fun with it!

But some challenges do pose risks...

CREATE: TRENDS & CHALLENGES

Knowing when to join in or opt out is the ultimate challenge.

Teens are still developing their critical thinking skills and impulse control. This can make it challenging (another pun) for them to evaluate risks or consequences. When it comes to creating online trend or challenge videos, help them:

Consider the Impact

- **Pause.** Take a moment before jumping right in.
- **Assess Risk.** Ask yourself...
Is it safe? What could go wrong? Could I get hurt? Is it breaking any rules? Is it kind? Is it true?
- **Make the Call.** If it's risky or dangerous, don't do it. If you're not sure, wait until you are, or check with a trusted adult.

Do the Research

While some challenges pose risks, many offer a positive experience. If you're uncertain, seek out reliable sources for more info.

Report It

Remind them they can help stop the spread of misinformation and danger by reporting (and not creating or sharing) harmful challenges and hoaxes.



CONSIDER THE RISKS: PRIVACY, PERMISSIONS & MISINFORMATION

Stay safe, follow the rules, and think critically.

Privacy

Remind your teen not to share real-time locations, private details that may be in their background or clothes, or people who haven't consented to be in their video.

Permissions

Rules, guidelines, and laws exist to protect us. When it comes to using music, images, or any other content your teen didn't create, encourage them to consider what permissions they have or need.

Misinformation

Teens are still developing the critical thinking skills needed to tell fact from fiction, and may be more likely to believe or share false information. Encourage them to not take what they see or hear at face value.

- Consider the source. Investigate accounts and what else they upload to make sure they're credible.
- Know fact from opinion. Facts can be proven with evidence. Opinions are thoughts or feelings.
- If in doubt, check it out. Use fact-checking tools like Snopes and FactCheck.org.

IS THIS FREE
AND AVAILABLE
FOR ME TO USE?

Who deserves
credit?

Sound shocking
or too good to
be true?

Words like "I think"
tell us info is based on
someone's beliefs.

WELL-BEING CHECK: TRUST YOUR GUT

Help your teen treat their feelings as signals, not distractions.

In content creation, it's easy for teens to get caught up in the fun or even external pressures or expectations. Encourage your teen to practice good self-care by reminding them they have control over their choices.

Guide them to check in with themselves and listen to their feelings as they create or get ready to upload.

NEGATIVE
Feelings like sadness or frustration are cues to stop or ask for help.

Feelings of discomfort or unease could be calls to pause and reflect.

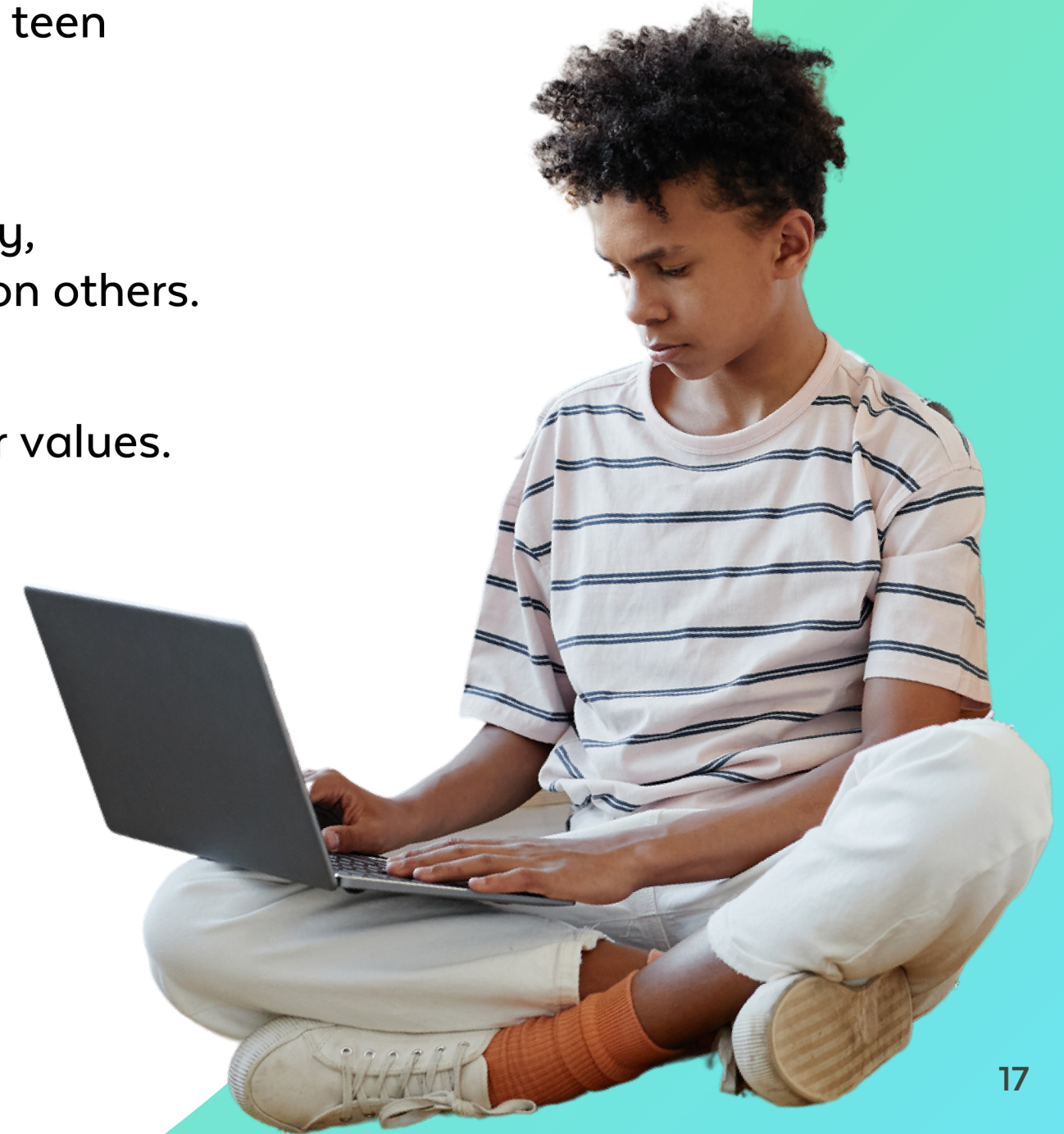
Mixed Signals
It's normal for your teen to feel nervous putting themselves out there. Help them decide if they have the good butterflies, or if something's not quite right.

POSITIVE
Feelings like joy and enthusiasm are likely signs they're on the right track.

WRAP-UP: READY TO UPLOAD?

While your teen's creating, keep these tips in mind.

- 1 Be an Ally**
Stay present! Whether you're co-creating or cheering them on, make sure your teen knows you're there to offer support and guidance.
- 2 Be a Good Digital Citizen**
Help them contribute to a positive online community by creating with empathy, promoting inclusivity, and being aware of the impacts their content can have on others.
- 3 Join the Fun with Trends & Challenges!**
Encourage them to show off their skills by opting into trends that support their values. But if something seems risky, help them decide when to opt out.
- 4 Consider the Risks**
Encourage them to create safely and responsibly by protecting their privacy, being aware of rules and guidelines, and looking out for misinformation.
- 5 Well-Being Check**
Guide your teen to trust their gut! They're in control of their choices and shouldn't upload anything that doesn't feel right to them.





**AFTER
THE
UPLOAD**

BE AN ALLY: NAVIGATE OUTCOMES

They've put their content (and themselves) out there...now what?

You never know how people will respond. Whether your teen's video is going viral at school or someone's feelings got hurt, staying grounded and prioritizing well-being is key.


- 1 Be Part of their Support System**
Bring it offline and encourage them to connect with people they trust. Maybe that's chatting through feelings with you, calling a friend, or getting advice from a professional.
- 2 Promote Self-Care**
Make sure they take breaks to reset. If they're feeling overwhelmed or discouraged, help them regain some balance by turning their attention to other activities that help them recharge.
- 3 Celebrate Them!**
Acknowledge their progress, both big and small! Whether their upload made them feel good, sparked a positive interaction, or truly reflects them—take time to celebrate!
- 4 Help them Learn From the Experience**
Embrace challenges as opportunities to grow, adapt, and refine their skills.




BE READY: FEEDBACK

Navigate the comment section with confidence.


It's important for teens to know that criticism is a natural and expected part of their content creation journey. Use these tips to help them tackle feedback in ways that promote positivity and well-being.

 **@Respond_with_Intent**
Help them stay purposeful and positive by having a plan for how they'll respond.




 **@Empower_them_with_Choice**
Remind them they have the choice to engage with (and enable) comments, or not.



 **@Promote_Positivity**
Encourage discussions that uplift others. Remind them to set the tone for positive interactions through their own comments.




 **@Picture_the_Person**
Remind them there's a real person, with real feelings and life circumstances, on the other end.



 **@Ignore_the_Trolls**
Empower them to ignore or delete unkind or trolling remarks. Platform tools can also help them filter out or disable comments (even temporarily).



 **@Prioritize_Mental_Health**
Encourage them to take breaks or better yet, take one with them!



BE READY: CYBERBULLYING

Navigate negativity with strength and support.

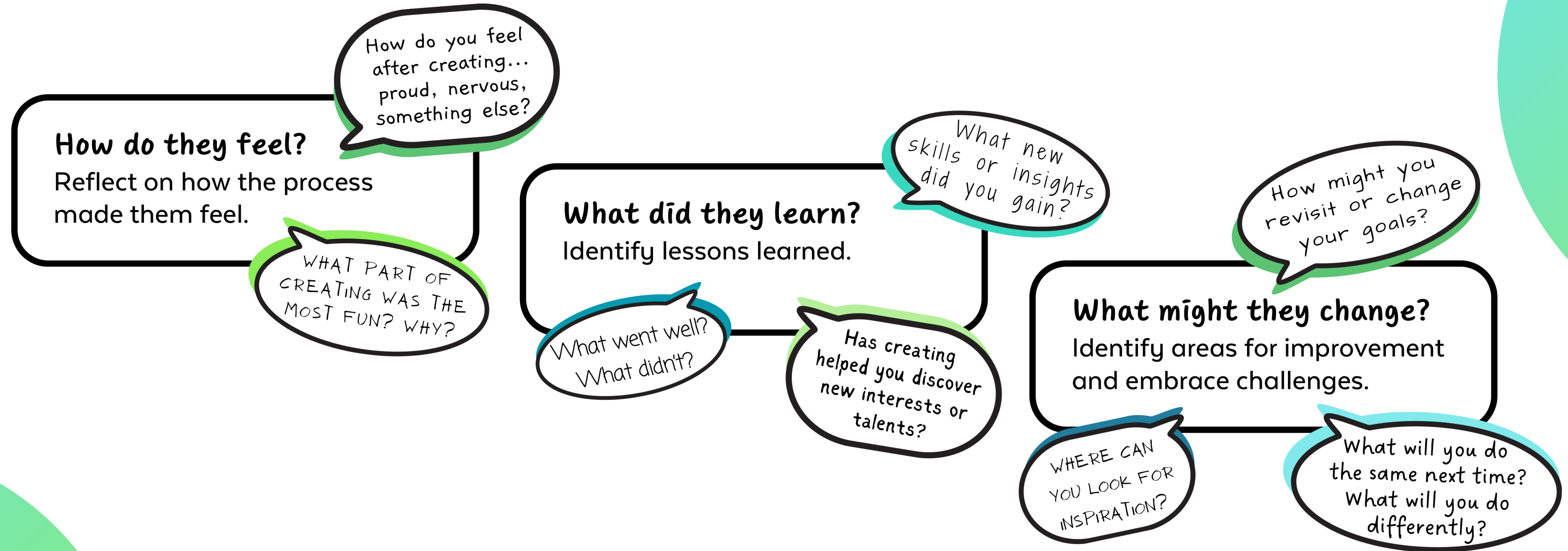
Cyberbullying is online behavior intended to upset, harass, or harm a victim (even a stranger). Digital drama is more everyday disagreements between peers. Both are downsides of the online experience that can have significant impacts on mental health. Guide your teen to navigate the potential challenges.

- 1 Prevent**
Help them recognize signs of cyberbullying (like name-calling, spreading rumors, embarrassing, threatening, or stalking) and steer clear of the slippery slope of digital drama (like online arguments and gossip). Make sure they know these behaviors are unacceptable.
- 2 Report**
Being an upstander—or someone who takes action to protect themselves and others from harm—fosters empathy and contributes to a positive online community. Encourage your teen to use blocking and reporting features for any instance of cyberbullying.
- 3 Support**
Getting bullied can be a very emotional experience. Make sure they know you're an ally they can confide in. Promote healthy coping strategies such as taking a break, doing activities they enjoy, and spending time with supportive friends and family.



WELL-BEING CHECK: REFLECT & REGROUP

Consider how they feel, what they've learned, and where they'd like to go next.



Help your teen view content creation as a journey of constant learning and improvement.

WRAP-UP: LEARNING FROM CREATION

When they start sharing content, keep these tips in mind.

Be an Ally

1 Sharing takes courage! Once they've put some content out there, remind them that you'll be around to help with whatever comes next. Be part of their support system, promote self-care, celebrate their wins, and learn from the experience together.

Be Ready

2 Dealing with critical feedback can be tough. Empower them to navigate their comment section in ways that promote positivity and prioritize their mental health.

Well-Being Check

3 Help them view content creation as a journey. Now that they've shared, encourage them to consider how they're feeling, what they've learned, and where they'd like to go next.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

There are so many ways to be a partner in the process. Here's a final review...

BEFORE CREATION

Be your teen's creative ally.

Before they get started, help them imagine how they'll get involved and ignite their creative passion while protecting their privacy and well-being.

DURING CREATION

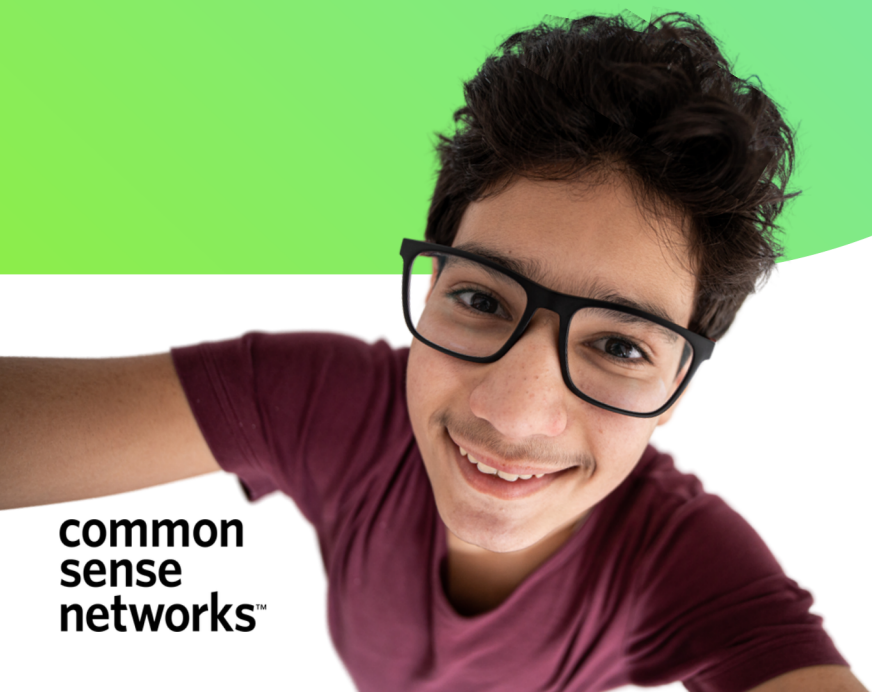
Be their sounding board.

While they're creating offer guidance where they need it: help them decide how to join the fun and focus on being a kind and responsible digital citizen.

AFTER THE UPLOAD

Be their partner in reflection.

After they've started sharing content, be there to celebrate them, check in on their feelings, navigate feedback, and decide what to create next!



Taking the time to support your teen's content creation goes beyond helping them make fun videos—it's about fostering **healthy, safe, and confident** digital citizens.

This marks the end of the guide and hopefully just the beginning of a positive content creation journey for your teen.

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