Episode Guide: Episode 1
“Enter Badromeda”

ABOUT THE ISSUE

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying encompasses a wide range of online behaviors including, but not limited to: posting hurtful comments, spreading rumors, sending unsolicited images, having personal information shared without consent, online impersonation, and spreading of unkind photos/videos, etc.

Studies done in the UK¹ and the United States² have found that cyberbullying is an increasingly prevalent problem for children, teens, and young adults online. In these studies, roughly 20-30% of those surveyed reported being cyberbullied in their lifetime, and about 10% admitted to cyberbullying others. Thirty-seven percent of the girls surveyed reported being cyberbullied, compared to 30% of the boys in the survey.

EPISODE SUMMARY

After falling into a transporter tube, Nettie and Webster find themselves lost in the realm of Badromeda - one of the six layers of “the cloud.” They encounter multiple cyberbullies, but also meet a helpful shopkeeper who helps them begin their journey to find Dr. Vera, the scientist.

LESSONS LEARNED

When dealing with cyberbullying and negativity, don’t respond. There are helpful people in unlikely places.

Activities for one-on-one and small group settings.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

• What were the Badromedans doing that upset Nettie and Webster?
• What advice would you give Nettie/Webster about dealing with mean pictures online?
• How is Harold, the shopkeeper, different from others in Badromeda?
• Have you ever been upset with someone online? How did you deal with it?
• If you saw someone being cyberbullied online, what could you do about it?
  » Do you know how to report cyberbullying to websites/apps?
  » Who could you talk to about a problem you are having? Who would you talk to at home? Who would you talk to at school? How about outside of school?

PUT IT INTO ACTION

For role play scenarios, you may choose to have kids write/act out a skit to demonstrate each situation.

• Imagine you see one of your friends cyberbullying someone from your class. What would you do?
• In this episode, Nettie and Webster see mean pictures of themselves being sent around. Imagine that you are Nettie or Webster. How do you feel? What should you do?
• Imagine a friend coming to you and telling you that they are being cyberbullied. What would you say to him/her? Help your friend figure out a plan to avoid and report bullying.


MissingKids.org/NetSmartz

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ONLINE PRIVACY

Privacy means something different to children who’ve grown up online. In fact, many children have an online presence that is documented even before they are born due to their parents’ use of social media, web forums, blogs, etc. Most social media sites require users to be at least 13 years old, but other platforms, such as some online games, also allow younger children to use chat features in the game or app. There is some information that is generally okay for kids to share, such as information about their hobbies and interests, and, when they are older (and with permission), pictures of family and friends. Information that should not be shared includes, but is not limited to: passwords, location, home/school addresses, school name, and phone number.

Children who have shared the type of personal information noted above have been shown to be more susceptible to online scams and identity theft. Data from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children also notes that individuals who engage in online sexual exploitation or extortion of children often develop a rapport with children through compliments, “shared interests,” and “liking” their online posts as part of the grooming process.

EPISODE SUMMARY

Nettie and Webster help a young Badromedan boy understand why privacy is as important online as it is offline.

LESSONS LEARNED

Everything you say and do online reflects on your character and can expose you to others who may try to take advantage of you, so leave a footprint you can be proud of later. Be careful what you post for others to learn, know, or assume about you.

Activities for one-on-one and small group settings.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

• What type of information did the character Zion share online?
• What were some of the ways Nettie said people could trick you online?
• Think about when you’re online, what type of information can others see about you?

PUT IT INTO ACTION

As a trusted adult, you can help guide children through the following activities.

• With a trusted adult, sign into the online games or apps you usually use. Have your trusted adult help you locate the privacy settings and talk about if there are any you want to update.
• Individually, make a list of the types of information you think it’s okay to share online and in apps. Compare your list to a partner’s list. What things appear on both lists? What things are different? Discuss your choices to include/not include certain information.
BYSTANDERS AND UPSTANDERS

Also discussed in the Episode Guide for Episode 1, cyberbullying is an increasingly prevalent problem facing children, teens, and young adults online. A “bystander” is anyone who sees the bullying, online or offline, but does not step in. Being an “upstander” means taking action to stop it. Some things that kids can do online to act as upstanders include: changing the focus of a negative conversation, expressing empathy toward the person being cyberbullied, checking in privately with the person being cyberbullied, reporting the cyberbullying to a trusted adult and/or to the website or app where it’s happening.

EPISODE SUMMARY

Nettie and Webster encounter a girl who is being cyberbullied. They remind her what she can do when facing a cyberbully and who she can talk to.

LESSONS LEARNED

It’s never too late to start making a good impression online. If you can do so safely, step in and help others who need assistance, even online!

Activities for one-on-one and small group settings.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

• Was Nettie a bystander or an upstander? What about Webster?
• What did Stella want to do about Celeste’s cyberbullies?
• What might happen if Stella and Celeste, plus their friends, write mean things back to the cyberbullies?
• What were some of Nettie and Webster’s suggestions for dealing with a cyberbully?

PUT IT INTO ACTION

For role play scenarios, you may choose to have kids write/act out a skit to demonstrate each situation.

• Have you ever been a bystander? If yes, think back to the time you were a bystander and act out what you could have done differently. If you have never been a bystander, imagine a situation where you see cyberbullying. What would you do?
• If you saw someone who was being a bystander to cyberbullying, how might you describe how to be an upstander to them?
• Create a short skit that shows at least one way someone may be a cyberbully. Have one person act as a bystander and the other act as an upstander. Have the upstander explain to the bystander why he or she should also become an upstander.
• Make a list of at least three trusted adults, close friends, and/or family members who you would feel comfortable talking to if you ever experience cyberbullying.
UNRELIABLE INFORMATION

Between 2014 and 2018, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children’s CyberTipline received over 4,000 reports of misleading domain names and over 10,000 reports of misleading words or digital images online. These misleading domains often lead to sites that contain content that is sexual or violent in nature and inappropriate for children. Beyond misleading domain names, as the internet allows more information to be spread quicker than ever before, it has become increasingly difficult to differentiate between reliable and unreliable information online. In fact, a 2018 study on critical thinking and digital literacy found that a majority of young adult professionals failed a quiz that assessed their ability to spot inaccurate “news” online.

EPISODE SUMMARY

Nettie and Webster get distracted while riding towards Sector 7 and Webster loses the map. They must seek out reliable sources to redraw an accurate map.

LESSONS LEARNED

Be a cautious consumer of information. Information presented, whether on websites or from individuals, is not always what it appears to be and can often be misleading. There are many trusted sources online, check for .EDU or .GOV. When in doubt, get a trusted adult to double check.

Activities for one-on-one and small group settings.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

• Do you think you can tell the difference between true and false information online?
• What things should you think about when deciding to trust something online?
• Are there any websites you KNOW you can trust the information on?
• Have you ever accidently found something online that you didn’t mean to? How did you feel? What did you do about it?

PUT IT INTO ACTION

• If you have access to the internet, visit a site with news written for kids, such as TimeForKids.com or NewsForKids.net. Read at least one article and explore the websites. What information on the sites helps show that they are trustworthy?
• With a partner, discuss why someone may publish something misleading or untrue online. Do you think the growth of the internet has made it easier or harder for untrue information to spread? Why?

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1 NCMEC Quarterly Program Progress Report
INAPPROPRIATE ONLINE CONTENT

As noted in the guide for “Fact or Fake?”, between 2014 and 2018, NCMEC’s CyberTipline received over 4,000 reports of misleading domain names and over 10,000 reports of misleading words or digital images online.¹ These misleading domains often lead to sites that contain content that is sexual or violent in nature and inappropriate for children. If a child encounters inappropriate online content they can use the back button or (x) to exit the page or turn off the monitor and get help from a trusted adult.

Sometimes, as children become more sexually curious, they may use the internet to seek out sexual content. A 2017 study found that the average age that male children first were exposed to pornography was 13, with the youngest exposure reported at age 5.² If children have questions about sex and development, it is preferable that they have a trusted adult they are comfortable talking to about these subjects, rather than turning to the internet where the information may or may not be accurate or appropriate.

EPISODE SUMMARY

Realizing they haven’t checked in with their trusted adult, Nettie and Webster attempt to send him a message but wind up on a site with inappropriate content. They turn off the monitor and get an adult to help them exit the site and send a message. However, the message fails to send between the two realms of the cloud. Back in the NetSmartz Neighborhood, signs that the Webville Outlaws plan to make the internet less safe are starting to appear.

LESSONS LEARNED

Checking in with your trusted adult is always important. If you see anything online that makes you sad, scared, or confused, you can always close the window or turn off the monitor, then tell a trusted adult about what happened.

Activities for one-on-one and small group settings.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

• Have you ever accidently found something online that you didn’t mean to? How did you feel? What did you do about it?
• Who could you talk to if you found something online that upset you?
• Have you ever looked up information on the internet that you felt embarrassed to ask an adult about? How did you think an adult might react to your question had you asked them? How would you have wanted them to react instead?

PUT IT INTO ACTION

• Imagine a friend of yours found something inappropriate online. They’ve told you about it and have offered to show you. What would you say? What would you do?
• Imagine you’ve accidently found something online that is inappropriate. You want to ask a trusted adult for help. What could you say to ask for help?

¹ NCMEC Quarterly Program Progress Report
ONLINE ENTICEMENT

In this episode “online enticement” is portrayed in a face-to-face interaction, but in reality this is a type of exploitation that occurs on the internet, involving an individual communicating with someone believed to be a child with the intent to commit a sexual offense or abduction. This type of victimization takes place across every platform; social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms, etc.

The most common tactics used to entice children include:

- Engaging in sexual conversation/role playing
- Asking the child for sexually explicit images of themselves or mutually sharing images
- Developing a rapport through compliments, discussing shared interests, or “liking” their online post
- Sending or offering sexually explicit images of themselves
- Pretending to be younger
- Offering a financial or other incentive such as money, promises, etc.

Certain online behaviors may increase the risk for online enticement. These behaviors include:

- Lying about being older to access certain platforms which would allow communication with older individuals
- Initiating online communication and/or offering an exchange with offenders, such as requesting financial compensation or other goods for sexually explicit content of oneself
- Sending explicit photos or videos (known as “sexts”) of oneself to another user

EPISODE SUMMARY

While riding towards Sector 7, Nettie and Webster encounter a group of teenagers riding the same trail. The teens ask them lots of questions and try to convince them to join their group and explore the realm together. This makes Nettie and Webster uncomfortable and they decline the offer. They report the suspicious behavior to a police officer they meet in Sector 7.

After reporting the incident, Nettie and Webster piece together the clues they’ve learned about Dr. Vera Tas and find her laboratory!

LESSONS LEARNED

Not everyone is who they say they are online, or in-person. If anything or anyone on- or offline makes you feel sad, scared, or confused, it is OK to remove yourself from the situation. Telling a trusted adult about what has happened is important.

Continued on the next page.
Activities for one-on-one and small group settings.

**DISCUSSION STARTERS**

- Has anyone ever tried talking to you online about inappropriate things? What did you do?
- Do you know all of your online friends in person? When was the last time you reviewed your friends/followers on the sites/apps/games you often use?
- Do you know how to report and block people on the sites/apps/games you often use?

**PUT IT INTO ACTION**

- Imagine you are playing a game online and another user starts talking to you. The person seems really fun! You seem to have lots of things in common. After a couple conversations, the user asks you to send a picture to them. What would you do?
- If you have access to the sites/games/apps the child often uses, ask: Do you know how to report inappropriate content on the sites/games/apps you like to use? Can you show me? If this child is unsure, explore the menus with them to find the reporting tools.

For step-by-step guides about reporting inappropriate content on various online platforms visit [MissingKids.org/GetHelpNow/IsYourExplicitContentOutThere](https://MissingKids.org/GetHelpNow/IsYourExplicitContentOutThere)