

## The Complete Avatar Responses

*For classes using the Avatars Anonymous website:* This is a document with every Avatar and all of their responses on the Avatars Anonymous website. You can use this document as a reference guide.

*For classes using the Computerless Version:* This document has every Avatar and each of their responses. Print out this document and cut along the dash lines to separate the individual responses. Refer to Appendix B: Teacher Overview for Journal Responses to see the times to hand out the indicated response to their corresponding student. Each response has the name of the Avatar and the specific response.

# Alcohol, Tobacco, & Other Drugs

**Olivia Freeman**

*Olivia's Biography:* Hi, I'm Olivia but my friends call me Livi. I love movies and concerts. My favorite movie is Fight Club. I hope to get into NYU to major in film analysis.

*Gender:* Female

*Age:* 17

*Birthday:* August 15



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*Olivia's Stress:* Hey there! It's Livi, how are you? I've been all right; I feel like I've been running at 100 miles an hour lately. Between working on college applications and spending time with my friends, I rarely have time for myself anymore. My friends and I have been going to concerts a lot, and some of them are fun and some of them make me a little nervous...but my friends buy me the tickets so how can I say no? I love spending time with my friends, but I really want more time to myself so that I can keep looking and applying for colleges. I really want to get into a great film school! How can I convince my friends that college is important to me and that I can't go out very often, without them feeling like I'm a bad friend?



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*Olivia's Health Challenge:* Hi again, long time no see. How've you been? Things are getting kind of complicated. So you know how I told you about how my friends have been really into concerts lately? Well, it's gotten kind of scary. A little while ago, we were all at this event called "Electric Circus" and a few of my friends had these pills that they were passing amongst each other. I wasn't totally sure what they were, but my friend Ashley said that they would make me feel good. Plus I was really stressed out over my college applications so... I took one. And it was really fun while it lasted but something didn't feel right. All of a sudden, I had felt extremely energetic and pumped up. I was really into the music and was dancing a lot! I'm pretty sure the pill was a strong drug, but it can't be that bad if it made me feel good, right? And now after that first time, my friends do it even more frequently. They want me to do it at the shows we go to every weekend. I talked to my older sister, Callie, about the pill I took and how it made me feel. She said she thinks it might be ecstasy, and that I should stop taking the pills before I become addicted. Do you think what I've been doing is bad? I'm so confused and could really use your advice.



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*Olivia's Alert:* Your avatar has been using **ecstasy**, a hallucinogen often found in pill form. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



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*Olivia's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey! It's been a while, what have you been up to? Things have been interesting with me. Thank you so much for your advice last time, it was very comforting. However, now I'm having another issue! So I went to a few concerts and decided not to take any pills and I felt fine, but then my friends got upset with me! They said it's better if everyone takes them so everyone is having fun. When I told them that I didn't agree and wasn't going to take their pills anymore, they stopped inviting me to hang out with them. So I gave in and have been going out with them again and doing the pills. I'm torn because I don't want to lose my friends, but I know how serious ecstasy is. Callie has also been trying to get me to stop, since she's really worried. I really don't know what to do. What do you think I should do? I want to stop, but I'm not sure what to do to stand up for myself.



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*Olivia's Final Response:* Hi again, sorry it's been so long! How are things with you? Well, I have great news... I got into NYU! I'm so excited! Thank you so much for your support with my recent struggles; I don't know if I could have gotten into NYU without you. My friend situation turned out pretty poorly. There was a lot of arguing, and eventually I decided to leave the group because it wasn't healthy hanging out with them anymore. As a result, I'm all alone. The rest of my year has kind of sucked without anyone to hang out with on the weekends. Well, except Callie. We started hanging out more often, and I'm glad that she has stuck by my side through my situation. I'm proud of myself, and I hope my friends can have the same realization that I did some day. On the plus side, I've had time to watch some of my favorite movies! Anyways, thanks for your help. I hope your year went great. Bye!

## Perry Lowell

*Perry's Biography:* Hey guys, I'm in a band called Perry and the Death Nights. I'm the lead singer and we base our music off heavy metal. We have gigs here and there, but we're still pretty underground. Someday we'll be big. Listen to our music on YouTube! Anyways, I like video games, singing, and food.

*Gender:* Male      *Age:* 17      *Birthday:* January 17



*Perry's Stress:* Wuddup it's Perry. What have you been up to? I haven't been doing much lately... just trying to make new music and stuff but it's been kinda hard. The drummer in my band, Gerard, got a new girlfriend and has been spending more time with her than helping the band make new music. It's whatever. But when we all do get together to practice at my house, my parents get all mad at me. They say it rattles the house and that I "should do my homework and pull up my grades". I just don't think they like my music, which sucks... Parents are supposed to support their kids. Right? Anyways, how should I convince Gerard that he should make time for practice on our sweet new songs? We can't make this new album fire without him!



*Perry's Health Challenge:* Hey there. So my parents have been really stressing me out about college. They say I have to go, but I don't need a degree to do what I want to do. I just want to make music, I don't need to go to school for that. They told me I'm going nowhere in life and that really hurt. Part of me wants to make them proud of me for once, but the other part wants to rebel and I have been. I've been hanging out with the band more at my house to make them mad. But I know it won't help the situation, but I just feel like I can never please them. Music is my life though... I don't want to do anything else. My mom yelled at me the other day because she said I smelled bad. She smelled smoke on me, but I just told her that all the boys in the band smoke and that it wasn't me. Honestly, it was me who was smoking. I always see how most of my favorite lead vocalists smoke cigarettes and look so calm and cool. So I got a packet from one of my senior friends at school, and began smoking last week. So far, it has helped me feel more relaxed, even if it makes me have some coughing fits every now and then. My girlfriend Hailey tells me that I need to stop smoking because it's really bad for my lungs and that my voice sounds awful when I sing. Usually she likes to mess around with me, but I have a feeling she isn't joking around about how bad smoking is for my health. I don't really know what to do... I don't want my voice to sound bad every time I sing. Any advice? I'm not sure if cigarettes are bad for me, and what they can do to affect my health.



*Perry's Alert:* Your avatar has been smoking **cigarettes**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Perry's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey. Thanks for your advice; I know it's been a while. So you know how last time we talked I told you how I had started smoking? Well, I've continued to smoke even though I now know how bad it is for my health, but I think I'm becoming addicted. I just wanted to do something that I know my parents hate. I didn't mean for it to turn into this. I haven't smoked a cigarette in three days. I'm trying to stop, but my mom just yelled at me about my grades, and my band has been falling apart. Gerard is still hanging out more with his girl than with the rest of the band. Everyone is going their separate ways. It has just been stressful and a cigarette sounds so good. I'm craving one so bad right now. I have a packet in my backpack... I can just smoke one. But I know I shouldn't. What can I do to feel relaxed without lighting one up?



*Perry's Final Response:* Hey, how have you been? I've been doing so much better. My band and I have been getting together again and making more music. My parents still don't approve of that, but it makes me happy that we can all practice together again. I've decided to go to college at the University of Northern Colorado and that made my parents really happy. Not even going to lie, I'm looking forward to it next fall as well. I would never have thought I would be this excited. I also haven't had a cigarette in 7 weeks, which is great. I've had the urge and it hasn't been easy... but I took up a new addiction... to tea! Annie says it's really good for my voice, so I started drinking lots of it, mostly chamomile. I know it's better for me than cigarettes. I want to thank you for your support. It really helped me through this hard time in my life. I couldn't have done it without you. Thanks buddy.

## Raquel Levant

*Raquel's Biography:* Hi, I'm Raquel! I love designing clothes and dream of being a big fashion designer one day. I can't wait to be able to run my own line of amazing clothes. I could eat Italian food any day!

*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 18      *Birth day:* February 15



*Raquel's Stress:* Hey, it's Raquel! How are you? I'm doing pretty well myself. School is getting crazy though. I have to spend all day learning about math and science stuff when I could be building my portfolio. I'm trying everything I can to keep up with the pointless assignments and make a name for myself in the fashion world. There just aren't enough hours in the day!! I'm running on, like, 2 hours of sleep right now. I still have to finish this science project for tomorrow on top of having to stage a photo shoot for some of my new designs. I'm so tired and I just don't know how to get everything done in such little time. What do you think I should do to better manage my time so that I don't feel so rushed and exhausted?



*Raquel's Health Challenge:* Hey, it's Raquel again! It's been a while. Remember how I was telling you about my photo shoot and science project? Well, I was so stressed about getting both of them done, that I went to my friend Michelle for advice. She told me that whenever she feels worn out, she takes meth to feel more energized. I was unsure, but Michelle said that meth keeps you awake and alert. It was worth a try, I guess. That night, I was wide-awake! The energy I felt was amazing. I finished my science project pretty quickly, and still had time to set up for my photo shoot. The thing is, I failed my science project. I mean, I'm not very good at science, but I usually get at least a C+ on my projects. I liked the rush from the meth I took, but I didn't like the grade I got and neither did my parents. I haven't done it since then because it didn't really work out that well and I felt nauseous, but I really do miss feeling that energetic. I know it's pretty bad for my health, but what should I do to stop? What could I do instead to have more energy in a healthier way?



*Raquel's Alert:* Your avatar has tried **meth**, also known as methamphetamine. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Raquel's Advocacy Challenge:* Hi again, it's Raquel. Thanks for the advice you gave me the last time we talked. Michelle came over the other day and asked if I wanted some meth. Because of all of the facts I learned from you I was able to turn her down...barely. It's hard because she's my friend, even though she does bad things. I don't want to lose her as a friend but I can't be around that stuff. It's getting too hard to turn down, and I feel like I might give in soon. What should I do to tell Michelle I don't want to take meth without hurting her feelings?



*Raquel's Final Response:* Hey, it's Raquel again. Thanks so much for the advice you gave me the last time we talked. I found out that the best way to get over my problem is to get rid of my bad influences. I told Michelle that I didn't want to take meth anymore, and I'm pretty sure she got mad. She stopped hanging out with me, but that's ok. No Michelle, no meth. I feel so much better without that constant urge to take more meth. I'm glad I was able to stop and not crave more meth after that one time...I'm in a much better place in my life now. My fashion design teacher at school recommended me this great fashion camp program in the Big Apple! I'm so excited to get out of town and explore New York. Wish me luck! I hope everything is well with you too! Goodbye!

**Angelo Newman**

*Angelo's Biography:* Hey, my name is Angelo. I used to play lacrosse, but now I'm more into street art. I usually like to be out doing things, and I'm a very independent person. In the future, I hope to be a DJ.

*Gender:* Male      *Age:* 18      *Birthday:* February 13



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*Angelo's Stress:* Hello, it's Angelo! How are things going in your life? I've been having a good time and chillin' out... mostly. I'm about to be a senior, so I need to start thinking about where I'm applying to college and I'm feeling overwhelmed with all the work I have to do. After quitting lacrosse, I've noticed—well, my parents have mostly noticed—that I've been having trouble focusing on a lot of things, including school. I mean, school hasn't always been the most important thing to me, but I know it matters to my parents. I know I need to do well on my SAT & ACT scores, but all the pressure is getting me really worked up, and I'm not sure how to deal with it. What can I do to not feel so nervous about doing well in school and staying focused? What would you suggest?



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*Angelo's Health Challenge:* Hey, Angelo again. So you know how I told you about how I'm super worried about taking the SAT & ACT and also stressed about applying to college? Well, my parents and I talked to my doctor a while back, and he prescribed Ritalin for my test anxiety and focus issues. Now that I'm finally done taking the SAT & ACT, my doctor and parents feel that I don't need the medication anymore, but I've started to feel really attached to it. I love the way Ritalin makes me feel, and I don't want to stop using it. I'm not sure this is very good for me, but it feels great! I began to take more pills than my prescription tells me to take per day, but my mom keeps hiding them from me. Every time I find them again, my mom yells at me and says I need to stop before I overdose. I think she's overreacting, because how bad can they really be if they make me feel better? What's the worst that could happen?



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*Angelo's Alert:* Your avatar is dealing with **prescription drug abuse**, and is using ritalin outside of the instructed use. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



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*Angelo's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey, it's Angelo. Thanks for the advice you gave me. I thought about it, and realized it probably wasn't good that I was taking so much Ritalin, so I tried to stop but after about a week I couldn't take it anymore. It was starting to keep me awake for long periods of time, but now I'm always sleepy! I started feeling nervous again because I can't concentrate in class without taking Ritalin. I just love the feeling that it gives me too much! I know I should really stop, but I want to still feel calm and focused at school. So anyways, my mom set up another appointment with my doctor to see if the Ritalin is becoming a bad thing for me. I'm really nervous about talking to him, but I really do want help. How can I explain to my doctor what is going on and have him help me find other solutions to feel good and focused? I don't want to depend heavily on the Ritalin anymore.



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*Angelo's Final Response:* Hi again. So I went to my doctor again to try to get some help with what I'm dealing with. He really helped me on the first step to getting better and has told me healthier ways to stay focused and feeling good without prescribed drugs. Things have been going well so far, but I hope I will be able to continue to not misuse prescription medications in the long run. Thanks for all your help through this! It's been nice getting to know you.

## Ryan Lavine

*Ryan's Biography:* Hey, my name is Ryan and I love filmmaking and going to movie premieres with my friends. Last year, I spent the year abroad in South America and loved it! Eventually I want to direct movies and hopefully win an Oscar.

Gender: Male

Age: 16

Birthday: January 15



*Ryan's Stress:* Hey it's Ryan, how are you? I've been good, just chillin with my bros and watching movies. Do you like movies? Because I love them; I think that they're a work of art. It's my dream to make movies and win an Oscar. I've been practicing filming since I was 12 when my dad got me his old camera. Ever since then, I have been on the path of filmmaking. But right now, my computer is broken! So my filming is at a stop right now, and it's pissing me off that I can't work on my movies. I'm in a filming group at my school, and they depend on me to put together all of the movies. I don't have a lot of money right now to fix my computer, so I'm not really sure what to do. I guess I could find something else to do in my free time. What do you think? What new hobbies do you suggest I try out?



*Ryan's Health Challenge:* Hey it's Ryan again, so do you remember when I told you that my filming was on hold because of my broken computer? It turns out that my filming group replaced me, because I have been holding the group back with my broken equipment. This sucks! I guess I'll try to stay calm with a joint. That always seems to cheer me up, even though I sometimes cough a lot. I tried to give some with my friend Aiden, but he said no and told me I'm foolish for smoking weed. He says it's bad even though most people say it's "organic". But it helps me take my mind off of my filming group! I feel better when I smoke weed, but the coughing is starting to worry me. It gets pretty bad, and sometimes I get headaches. I hope the marijuana isn't what's causing these things. What do you think I should do to better my health? Maybe it's just a cold.



*Ryan's Alert:* Your avatar has been using **marijuana**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Ryan's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey dude, thank you for your support! I've been trying to stop spending so much money on my pot so that I can fix my computer. I'm saving up slowly, but at least I'm saving up. I had gone to my doctor earlier this week, and found out that smoking marijuana is actually pretty bad for my health. Turns out that the coughing is not a cold, but it is from smoking weed. My doctor told me that I should try to stop, because it could lead to bronchitis. So now I've been smoking less and not as often. I hope I have enough money soon to finally get my computer to work again, but I don't know if it's worth it anymore. My team is refusing to work with me, even if I do get my computer fixed. They say I get so high, that I can't concentrate on my work or the films. I've been trying to stop, but it might take some time...What can I do to completely stop smoking weed? I need someone to help me, but how can I tell them what's going on without getting into trouble?



*Ryan's Final Response:* Hey, so it turns out that my group isn't coming back to me. But I did get enough money to fix my computer, so now I'm looking for a new filming group to work with. I haven't rolled a joint for some time now, and I will always remember to put my filming passion first. Thank you for being there for me and helping me change my life for the better.

## Reed Truman

*Reed's Biography:* Hey dudes. My name is Reed. I'm a varsity baseball player and I love to have a good time with my friends. I'm really pumped to attend ASU for sports in the fall. Also, my favorite car is a Jeep Wrangler.

*Gender:* Male      *Age:* 17      *Birthday:* August 1



*Reed's Stress:* Hey, it's Reed! How are things going? I've been ok; I'm mostly just hanging with my friends and playing baseball. I'm trying to play it professionally, because one day, I will become a baseball champion! I wish I could play on my school's team, but my grades are just not good enough to even get close to being on the team. School is so hard for me to stay focused on. If I don't bring up my grades, I won't be able to attend ASU for college. I want to go there for the sports and teams they have. I could get a scholarship for sports, but I still need to have passing grades to get in. I hope I can get my grades up in time to attend the school of my dreams. I just need to find some way to unwind from all this stress, maybe then I could do better. What do you think I could do to reduce my stress, so then I could bump my grades up?



*Reed's Health Challenge:* Hey, it's Reed again. I've been trying to get my grades up, but they are still really bad. I most likely won't be able to play sports because of them. Thinking about my future is getting stressful, and if I don't get any scholarships, it'll make me feel even worse. I've been trying to get my mind off things by hanging out with some of my friends on the team. They have been taking me to all these parties most weekends, and they are pretty fun. I like it, there are so many girls and everyone drinks. I can really relax there. My buddy Reggie said to slow down on the drinking at this one party, but he's always worrying. He knows I'm just trying to cut loose, although my hangovers get pretty bad sometimes. I just hope they don't affect me too much. What else could I do to not feel so stressed out?



*Reed's Alert:* Your avatar is dealing with **alcohol abuse** and is developing a dependency. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Reed's Advocacy Challenge:* Hi, it's me again, I just want to say thank you for your advice. I never knew that alcohol could be that bad for you. I went to my doctor for my physical so I can possibly join my school's baseball team the other day, and he found out that I drink in my blood test results. He talked to me about how bad it is for my liver and other parts of my body. He also told me that I would have to stop drinking in order to play any sports. This worried me and I know I really have to try and stop now. But it's so much fun, especially at the parties I go to. I hope I can join the baseball team soon, so I can keep myself busy and away from any alcohol. In the meantime, what do you suggest I do to help my drinking problem, but still have fun with my friends?



*Reed's Final Response:* Hello again, I finally got my grades up just in time for report cards! I still have to try and continue to get better grades for college. I can't go for the baseball team yet, but hopefully I can get in soon. It's been awhile since I stopped drinking, thanks to Reggie. He has been taking me to our school's baseball field to practice, and it has helped me spend my time outside instead of partying and drinking. Thanks for your help!

**Katya Feltz**

*Katya's Biography:* Hi, I'm Katya and I love acting and singing. I have been involved in drama classes since I was six years old. Next year, I want to be accepted into UCD. Right now I'm undecided, but I think I want to major in English.

*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 17      *Birthday:* July 8



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*Katya's Stress:* Hello! How was your day? Mine was fine, except I'm sooo busy! I'm trying to get into the University of Colorado at Denver (UCD). I want to possibly major in English. I just love the fine arts so much, but most of all, I love writing song lyrics. I've started to get to know some people from UCD, maybe they could help me get into the choir program or a songwriting class. They are awesome friends. But for now, I have a ton of essays to write. On top of that, I need to keep my grades up in the rest of my classes. I'm starting to feel overwhelmed! All this writing is starting to make me feel really tired, but I need to continue to get into UCD. What can I do to make all my homework feel less stressful?



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*Katya's Health Challenge:* Hello again! It's me. Well, I'm very happy. My new friends, whom I made at college, are so awesome. I have more energy to get all my work done, too. When I went to hang out with them a few nights ago, they gave me some cocaine to rub on my gums, and it really helped me feel great and energized. I've been taking more in the afternoons when I'm busy with homework, and the cocaine has helped me get through it! This has been helping me feel more awake and I feel more capable of keeping up with my work. I want to stop using it, but after all the energy is gone, I just crave for more. Plus, I can't sleep through the night anymore. I'll wake up two or three times and have trouble falling back asleep. I'm not sure what to do and could use your advice. I need to rest, but then I need the energy I get from the cocaine. What can I do to regulate my sleep again? Could it be the cocaine that keeps me awake?



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*Katya's Alert:* Your avatar has been using **cocaine**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



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*Katya's Advocacy Challenge:* Hi there, it's me again. I just really want to say thank you for everything that you've tried to do for me, including the advice you gave me. I know how bad cocaine is for me, in both body and mind, and how the addiction could kill me. I have been trying on my own to stop, and because my money is all gone. But it's been so hard; I just wish I could have more help to make the stress go away. My parents don't know and I'm very reluctant to tell them. But what if they send me to rehab? Rehab scares me and I don't ever want to go there, what if other people find out, or what if I fail the program? My life is so over; I'm so stupid for ever trying it. I haven't talked to any of the people from UCD, so that they don't offer me any more cocaine. But what if I start school there and I run into them again? How will I be able to turn down their offers without much drama?



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*Katya's Final Response:* Hey, it's Katya again, I just feel that I should tell you thanks for all the information that you've given me. I had a few problems when I was stopping, which was probably withdrawal symptoms. I had talked to my counselor about what I was going through, and helped me find healthier ways of gaining energy. He suggested that I try to eat more energy or granola bars, and I think they helped not only with giving me more energy, but they helped get my appetite back! When I was on cocaine, I wasn't feeling hungry when it was time for lunch and dinner. So I started eating energy bars at different times of the day, including while I do my homework. I was also waking up in the middle of the night, but it happens less often now. I now feel hungry around mealtimes again and sleep like a bear during hibernation. You've been a great friend, thanks again for all your help!

**Jack White**

*Jack's Biography:* Hey, my name is Jack. I enjoy playing the guitar, and I'm learning to play the piano. Even though it's difficult to make it big with a music career, it has always been a desire of mine.

*Gender:* Male      *Age:* 16      *Birthday:* March 9



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*Jack's Stress:* Hey what's going on? It's Jack. How have things been going for you? I hope all is well with school and everything. I have been having some problems at home. It's my mom. She's been acting really strange. This whole past week, whenever I try to go into my room, she stops me and tells me to go study, or go outside, or something like that. She has never done this before. At first, I didn't think anything of it. But now it is happening more and more often. All I want to do is practice playing my guitar, but I don't want to argue with my mom. What can I do to convince my mom to let me practice my music without getting into a fight with her?



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*Jack's Health Challenge:* Hey, so I know it's been awhile... but I need some advice. The thing with my mom has only gotten worse. I haven't had any time to practice my guitar without her interrupting me. But that's not all. Last week, I was having trouble getting to sleep. I had read somewhere that drinking cough syrup helps to make you feel sleepy. So I went into the bathroom and took some from my mom's medicine cabinet. I tried a little, but nothing happened. So I tried a little more. Soon, half the bottle was gone. I started to feel sleepy, so I went back to bed and fell right to sleep. I'm pretty sure it worked, because it lasted the rest of the night. I talked to some of my friends about it, and they told me it was probably some type of high. One of them, Kira, said I need to be careful because an overdose of cough syrup could lead me to the emergency room. But I kinda liked the way it made me feel. Plus, it made me forget about my mom and everything. I took even more the next night, but this time, I felt dizzy and kinda nauseous. This has happened for several nights in a row, and now I'm freaking out about it. What if Kira was right? What should I do to help me sleep at night, but not feel like I'm gonna throw up?



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*Jack's Alert:* Your avatar has been taking extreme amounts of **cough syrup** each night, which contain codeine. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



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*Jack's Advocacy Challenge:* Hi again. So about the cough syrup...It's gotten bad. I can't sleep without it. It's more of an addiction than anything else. I crave it throughout the day, not just at night anymore. I have already drank all that we had at home. I know it was wrong of me to do this, but a couple days ago, I stole some from the store. I've never stolen anything, but I'm running low again. I saw some at my friend Kira's house last week when we were hanging out. I want to take hers, but she saw me staring at the bottle and hid it from me. I know it's wrong to have these thoughts. I just can't help myself. I know I need help. How do I stop? Where do I go for help? I can't tell my mom. She wouldn't understand. What would you suggest?



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*Jack's Final Response:* Thanks for the advice you gave me. It's helped me a lot! I haven't had to drink cough syrup to sleep anymore. It's been about a week and a half! Kira went with me to our school nurse, and she helped me find other solutions to my sleeping problems. She also suggested to go to my doctor if I have further problems, but thankfully, her advice was enough to help me lay off the cough syrup. I still have cravings, but I can manage. It was hard to overcome this addiction, but my friends have been supportive. Especially Kira. She's great! We actually have a date tonight. I'm picking her up at 7 to go to the movies. Plus, things with my mom have gotten better. Turns out that she kept shooing me out of the house because she was hiding an electric piano to surprise me on my birthday! Anyways, thanks so much for everything!

# Bullying & Relationships

**Sarah Anderson**

*Sarah's Biography:* Hi there, I'm Sarah. I like to volunteer at my local soup kitchen, and I am interested in studying medicine in college. I have two younger siblings, one boy and one girl. After I graduate, I want to become a doctor and eventually open a clinic in a third world country.

*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 15      *Birth day:* December 4



*Sarah's Stress:* Hey! It's Sarah, how are you? I've been doing all right lately. I've been just a little bit stressed over school, since it's been really difficult. My mom works two jobs, so she can't take me to and from school. I take the bus or just wait at school until late in the afternoon, when she can pick me up. So I'm rarely ever home. When I have time, I do homework. I haven't really been able to do things I like to do, like helping at a soup kitchen near my house. I've just been having a really hard time balancing my schoolwork and the things I want to do. I have this really cool science teacher though! She is so excited that I want to become a doctor and she is really sweet. Sometimes, she waits after school with me until my mom can come and pick me up. I really don't want to fall behind in her class, but in doing so I'm falling back in all my other classes! Do you have any advice? What should I do to keep up in my other classes? Hopefully I can figure it out soon.



*Sarah's Health Challenge:* Hey. It's good talking to you again. I want to thank you for your advice. It really helped! But there is one thing I didn't tell you last time that's been bothering me and it is also why I try to stay out of my house as much as possible. I feel like you should know that my dad is an alcoholic. When he gets drunk, he often hits my mom and I try and stick up for her but then he lashes out on me. My mom doesn't want me to get involved and tells me that it's "not a big deal". I'm worried about her and I'm worried about my younger siblings. I don't want them to see my dad hit my mom. They're usually asleep when it happens, but what if they do see it? I know that my mom is not okay. I just don't know what to do. This is really affecting me and I can see it in my grades and schoolwork. Even my science teacher can tell something is wrong. This isn't the first time my dad has hit my mom or me. What should I tell my mom to convince her that she needs to stand up for herself? For us?



*Sarah's Alert:* Your avatar is living in an abusive household and is dealing with **family violence**, but does not know how to get help. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Sarah's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey, thanks for your advice. But things have gotten worse. School has been rough, and sometimes I can't even make it because I have no means of transportation. My science teacher has been really worried... I'm falling really behind in her class, and she wants to help, but also she can't give me special privileges. If I fail her class, my chances of being a doctor are slim! Ughhh, I really want to do well. And then she saw bruises on my arm yesterday. My dad grabbed me and shoved me into the wall for asking for bus money. I told her that I fell, but I know she doesn't believe it. I just really don't want her to tell the school because then my dad might go to jail and I don't know what my mom, my siblings and I would do. Even though he spends most of his money on booze, the rest of the money he earns helps to pay bills. My mom can't provide for all four of us. I am really lost and don't know what to do. This is something that I don't want anyone to find out, but I really need help. Where do I even begin to search for help? What kind of help do I need for my family?



*Sarah's Final Response:* Hey there! Wow, things have definitely turned to the bright side! I'm all caught up with schoolwork, which is a huge relief. My science teacher had gotten so worried about my bruises, that she asked me to go to my counselor. She joined me, and when I talked to my counselor about my dad, he said he had to report him for being abusive. I got really worried, but my counselor assured me that he was trying to help me and my family get out of this situation without further harm. Later that week, an investigator named Carol came into my house while my dad was there. As usual, my dad was drunk. When she began to explain why she was here and started asking questions, my dad yelled at her very rudely and told her to get out. She tried to talk to him to calm him down, but my dad grabbed an empty bottle off the floor and threw it at her. Luckily, he missed and Carol was able to get out and call in the police that were waiting outside. They took my dad away, and the police had my mom and I file a report about the abuse my dad had committed. We have court in about a month, but it is such a relief to have my dad out of the house. We are also attending family therapy, which is helping us deal with the trauma my dad had caused. My mom found a new job that gives her time to drive me to and from school, and it also pays her enough to keep up with bills. Now I can do all my homework and study. I even have enough time to volunteer at the soup kitchen, and that makes me so happy. Thank you so much for your help. Your support and advice helped me more than words can even begin to explain. Thank you!

**Adriana Vasquez**

*Adriana's Biography:* Heeey! The name is Adriana, and when I grow up, I want to be an executive of a clothing line. I'm really good at taking charge, and I love to plan events for me and my besties.

*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 15      *Birthday:* August 21



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*Adriana's Stress:* Hello, it's Adriana. How are you? I'm pretty good. Things at school are good; I have a lot of classes with my friends this year, which makes school pretty fun. I just wish I could say the same about home. My mom and dad won't stop arguing over the silliest things for two seconds, and sometimes I wonder why we can't be in the same room together without awkward vibes. I'll try to talk to them about my day, but they'll ignore me and start arguing! I'm not sure what to do so they'll stop fighting all the time. How should I confront them and tell them to work out their problems with each other?



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*Adriana's Health Challenge:* Heyy, Adriana here. I've been here and there. My mom and dad are getting a divorce, so I've been spending a lot of time with my friends. We only get to hang out at school though, and on top of the divorce, there's this girl who's in all of my classes who I can't stand. She thinks she's all that and it's so annoying! I can't deal with her attitude, so I always feel obligated to let her know she's not as cool as she thinks she is. Whenever I say something, that entitled smile falls off her face. It always brightens my day when I know she's not smiling. I just don't feel like she deserves to be happy when I'm not. One of my friends, Diana, keeps telling me that I'm being really mean to her and that I need to stop. But I don't know if I should stop, because that girl is so annoying! What should I do besides call her names so that she stops bugging me so much?



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*Adriana's Alert:* Your avatar is a **bully**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



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*Adriana's Advocacy Challenge:* Heyyy, Adriana again. Things have been bad, to say the least. My mom and dad are making me decide who to live with and honestly, that's something I've been avoiding. I knew it was coming, but I just wanted to put it off for as long as possible. I love both of my parents and they both have my best interests at heart, but I hate that they're putting me in the middle of everything. I don't want to hurt either of their feelings if I chose to go with one and not the other. Second, you remember that girl I mentioned earlier? Well, she told the teacher I've been "bullying" her, when obviously she's only saying it for the attention. She just tries to make me look like the bad guy. I'm the bad guy? Diana says I am. I don't want to get in trouble! How can I avoid getting in trouble around this girl that I really dislike?



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*Adriana's Final Response:* Hello, it's Adriana. Thank you for everything. I decided that I would spend half of my time with each parent. It's pretty hard to try to balance both of them, but I'm managing. The principal had to step in after our teacher told him what was happening between that girl and I. He's making sure I stay away from her. That means all of my classes had to change. Now I don't have any classes with my friends anymore. I still see them from time to time, but it's not as often. I'll just have to make new friends in my new classes. Thank you for helping me turn over a new page in my life!

**Sam Baker**

*Sam's Biography:* Hey, I'm Sam!! I love to dance; I even went to dance camp in San Francisco! I want to go to Europe and join a dance company in the Netherlands. I'm a runner, and I want to be in an ironman competition.

*Gender:* Male      *Age:* 17      *Birthday:* April 24



*Sam's Stress:* Hey there, my name is Sam. What are you up to? I just got home from my new school in Wisconsin. I moved out here during the summer from California, and I miss my home already. My mom got a new job and we all had to move. Hopefully we'll go back someday, but for now, I've started to attend school again and today was my first day. As I walked nervously into the school, people stared at me. I was wearing a sweater and jeans since it was a bit chilly for me, but everyone was wearing shorts and summer clothes. I'm not used to the cold, but apparently, it isn't cold for everyone who lives so far up north. So I guess I made a weird first impression on what could have been my new friends. At least I wouldn't have felt so alone, in a new state and town with a bunch of strangers...Who am I kidding, I miss San Francisco! How should I distract myself from feeling so homesick? What would you suggest I do?



*Sam's Health Challenge:* Hey, it's Sam. So in my literacy class, I met a girl name Laurel and became friends with her. We sit next to each other and she has helped me pass with good grades. What's the problem? She's the girlfriend of the football player, Phillip. And because I've started to talk to her, Phillip thinks I like her. So now, he has the whole football team on my case, pushing me around the hallways, taking my lunch money, and the list goes on. The teachers have seen the football players messing around with me, but think that we are just playing around. I have some bruises on my arms and legs from all the pushing around. My parents have noticed, and now they have started to worry about me. They keep telling me to tell a teacher, or a hall monitor about what's going on. But will they believe me? What should I tell them, and what can I do to let the people at my school know what's going on?



*Sam's Alert:* Your avatar is being **bullied**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Sam's Advocacy Challenge:* Hi, guess who? So today after school, I was walking home when I was pushed into an alley and Phillip yelled at me to stay away from Laurel. He pushed me to the ground as his teammates roared with laughter. I stood up and fought back, tired of all the stress they've put me through. I swung at his face and knocked him to the ground as everyone went silent. The entire football team stared down at Phillip, shocked that I had knocked him out in one blow. Phillip then got back up on his feet and punched me in the stomach. I quickly head-butted Phillip, knocking us both to the ground. I tried to kneel on him to keep him still, but then he moved and we ended up rolling back and forth on the ground. We kept attacking each other until we heard sirens and someone in the crowd shouted "COPS!!" and everyone ran. I was able to hit Phillip one last time before jumping over a fence and I ran home from there. I hope he'll leave me alone, now that he got what he was asking for. I finally arrived home, and my parents were shocked at how I looked. My dad asked what had happened and if I was ok, while my mom washed some scrapes that I had and bandaged them. I told them I was fine, but then they told me that this was getting out of hand. I have to tell my school about what happened, before I get into another fight. What can I do to prevent further fights with Phillip?



*Sam's Final Response:* Hello, it's Sam. So remember how I got into a fight with Phillip? The cops found him in the alley and he told them that he got jumped by me. I was called into the principal's office and almost got in trouble until Laurel walked in. She had seen from behind a fence everything that happened and had recorded the fight. She showed the principal the video and then called the school's security officers, Phillip, and the football team into the office. The principal asked Laurel to replay the video for everyone to see. Slowly, Phillip became very pale and sweaty. The principal decided to take this to a more serious level and filed in our case for court. He also called my mom and told her what had happened, so when I got home, I thought I would get in trouble. Instead, she welcomed me with a big hug and said how sorry she was for not being there for me. I'm so glad that I stood up for myself and I get to keep my friendship with Laurel. She broke up with Phillip after realizing how horrible he is. So Phillip, along with the entire football team, all lost the privilege to play any sports for the rest of the school year and were each sentenced to community service. I've made more friends in all my classes and feel much more confident as I walk down the halls and wave at new friends. Not only do I have a group of friends to sit with at lunch, but I can also buy and eat lunch!! Thank you for hearing me out, I'll talk to you later. Bye.

## Akito Aomori

*Akito's Biography:* Hi, my name is Akito Aomori. I am a first-generation American. My parents immigrated here from Tokyo right before I was born. They work hard to provide for my brother and me. My goal in life is to be a rich and famous sportscaster.

*Gender:* Male

*Age:* 15

*Birthday:* July 23



*Akito's Stress:* Hello it's Akito! How have you been? I've been decent. I'm just starting attending a new high school and I really want to fit in. I've tried to get involved with activities that will help me with my future goals. For example, I recently got involved with my school's media and broadcasting club. It's a cool way to get to see the production process, and it interests me because I want to become a sportscaster when I'm older! Everyone is pretty nice...except for the director of the club. He's a senior named Jacque, and he can be really mean to some of the people on the crew. Everyone works really hard, but apparently Jacque doesn't see that. He thinks he can tell people what to do, and it's really starting to get on my nerves. I feel like I should tell him to stop, but I don't want Jacque to start yelling at me too. I just want to fit in! What can I do to avoid getting yelled at and becoming the new target?



*Akito's Health Challenge:* Hey again, it's me! How are things going for you? So you know how I told you about that senior Jacque? Well he's actually been pretty nice to me, he always asks me to get him water but it's not really a hassle. He really is great when it comes to directing. But remember when I told you he was kind of treating the rest of the crew poorly? Well he does it a lot more and I may have made it worse. There was this one day where this girl named Anna kept getting the boom mic in the shot and Jacque starting yelling at her. He said really harsh things about how she was "worthless" and "horrible at everything" and I don't know why but suddenly Jacque told her that she should just quit the club and she did! I feel horrible! She ran out, almost in tears. Afterwards, Jacque told me to get him some water, which seemed to calm him down. After that, he invited me to lunch with him and some other seniors. I don't like being around Jacque at all. I need your help! How do I get away from Jacque and his group of friends without them starting to make me feel terrible?



*Akito's Alert:* Your avatar is struggling with how to be an **active upstander to bullying**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Akito's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey it's been a while! How are you? I'm doing better than I was, your advice really helped. After Anna quit, a lot of my other friends in the club told me that what Jacque said was really rude and that I should tell him to apologize. So I tried to during one of our classes and he just looked at me weird. He told me to shut up, and that Anna didn't matter anymore. How rude! After that, Jacque got even meaner to the other people in the club, and it's getting out of control! So I try to lay low and keep to myself. One day during a run-through, Jacque was telling our sound operator Tom that the sound effects "sounded like a dog ran across the sound board", and I could tell Tom was upset. He then turned to me and said, "Akito, tell him his sound effects suck", and I remember how that made Anna feel when he was mean to her so I just said, "Oh I wasn't really listening." Jacque was so mad at me after that, that he didn't talk to me at all. He stopped giving me stuff to do around the club. It's making me feel terrible. The one thing I wanted this year was to fit in! I'm really considering going back to Jacque and telling him how sorry I am, but I'm afraid that if I do, I will end up getting yelled at and humiliated. I really don't know what to do right now. How should I confront Jacque and tell him to stop being so rude to everyone?



*Akito's Final Response:* Hey it's been so long! Sorry I've been out of touch. So much has happened. Anyways, how are you? I told Jacque that I didn't like how badly he treats my fellow club members and he said that he was never mean, he was just giving "constructive criticism." I don't completely agree with his views, but he did seem to have backed off a little bit. Thank you so much for your guidance; it really gave me the strength to stand up and say something. The rest of the club members and I have made a pact to defuse situations like the ones with Anna and Tom when they come up, so it's made us all a lot closer. I don't go to lunch with Jacque and his older friends anymore, but that's okay because I feel like I fit in more with my other friends in the club. Now when I see someone being mean, I know that I can do something to stop it. Thanks again!

**Jorge Diaz**

*Jorge's Biography:* Hey, my name is Jorge. I have a younger brother and sister, and I really like math and working with computers. I think it would be pretty cool to work for Google one day.

*Gender:* Male      *Age:* 15      *Birthday:* October 13



*Jorge's Stress:* Hey, it's Jorge. How are you doing? I'm doing fine. Today was kind of rough at school. I was walking down the hallway when I saw a new student come into the building. At our school, new students are paired with students that serve as tour guides for a day. Unfortunately for this kid, he was paired with Tommy. I don't know why they decided Tommy was a good role model for this kid, but whoever made that decision made a huge mistake. Tommy isn't your typical jock; he has the physical strength of one, but he also has the smarts to know that words hurt too. I know this because Tommy and I had problems a few years ago. I used to be friends with him, but for whatever reason, he started to spread some pretty bad rumors about me and we stopped talking to each other. I'm stressing out because I know that the new kid is just the type of kid that Tommy would choose to pick on. I don't want what happened to me to happen to him, or anyone else. What can I do to help the new kid out from getting bullied by Tommy?



*Jorge's Health Challenge:* Hey, it's Jorge again. I haven't talked to you in a while. So you remember how I was telling you about Tommy and that new kid? Well, my fears came true today. Tommy was walking down the hallway and wasn't paying attention to where he was going. Andrew, the new kid, was having trouble with his locker. Tommy walked past Andrew's locker just as it finally gave way to Andrew's furious pulling. I watched in horror as the locker door swung outward and smacked Tommy right in the face. Before I could blink an eye, Tommy was in front of Andrew. Before I could make a move, Andrew was picked up and thrown in the same locker that hit Tommy. Andrew's a small kid, so he fit easily and the door shut with a resounding click. I rushed toward the locker to try to free Andrew, but as I did, I remembered the look Tommy had on his face. I don't ever want that look to be aimed at me, so I decided not to stir the pot. I stopped where I stood and walked right past the locker and went to class. I hate how I dealt with the situation, but what else should I have done?



*Jorge's Alert:* Your avatar is an **inactive bystander to bullying**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Jorge's Advocacy Challenge:* Hi again! Thanks so much for the advice you gave me! Unfortunately, nothing has changed. Everyone was at lunch the other day and Tommy decided to make a scene. Just as Andrew got his food and was going to find a table to sit, Tommy called him over very loudly. You should have seen the look on Andrew's face. He was elated at being recognized by a group of the most popular jocks in the school. Everyone looked up from what they were doing to see where the shout had come from. Just as everyone was about to go back to what they were doing, one of Tommy's friends stuck a foot out. Andrew tripped and his whole tray of food scattered on the floor and all over him. From the ground and through the crowd of laughing, spiteful children, Andrew met my gaze. Even from where I was sitting, I could see the intense hurt in his eyes. As he left the cafeteria, I wondered if I could have done something to help him. What should I tell the teachers at my school to help Andrew without getting myself involved?



*Jorge's Final Response:* Hey, it's Jorge again! I finally gained the courage to stand up for Andrew. After school one day, I found Tommy on top of Andrew, shoving his face in the dirt. I couldn't take it any more so I quickly ran back near the entrance of my school to tell a hall monitor what was going on. The monitor, Mr. Jenson, came with me to where Andrew and Tommy were and broke up the fight. He took Tommy inside by the arm while Andrew and I followed to help file a report. Tommy ended up getting suspended, and can no longer be anywhere near Andrew or I. I couldn't have done this without you. Andrew and I have become really good friends since then. We still have to deal with Tommy though. I stood up to him and it reminded him that I still existed. Tommy doesn't get the satisfaction he used to, which makes me happy. It means that he hasn't been bugging anyone anymore. Thank you again for all you did to help me become a better person!

**Sammi Adams**

*Sammi's Biography:* Hi guys, I'm Sammi. I'm really active with my community group. I really like to volunteer at the local animal shelter with my boyfriend. We've been dating for three years now. He's so great. <3  
*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 17      *Birthday:* October 12



*Sammi's Stress:* Hi it's Sammi. How have you been? I've been really good! I spend a lot of time volunteering at the animal shelter and working with my community group. My boyfriend, Jones, doesn't like the idea that I spend so much time with my group instead of with him. I tell him he can come, but he always says no. I'm not sure what to do because I love spending my time with my group, but Jones is important to me too. How can I balance my time spent with my group and with my boyfriend?



*Sammi's Health Challenge:* Hey it's Sammi. Today was a rough. I was working with my community group on a project and I lost track of time. I was late to the movie night Jones and I had planned and we got into a big fight. He shoved me, and I lost balance. As I fell, I accidentally hit a lamp pretty hard. I got a huge cut on my arm from the glass that shattered. Jones didn't even say sorry or at least helped me up! He just left my house. That was really strange of him to treat me like that. What should I do? Should I talk to him and try to work things out with him?



*Sammi's Alert:* Your avatar has been in an **abusive relationship**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Sammi's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey it's Sammi again. Thank you for the advice. I've been thinking it's time for me to break up with Jones. But I'm a bit nervous and can't help but feel fear in my gut. I want to end it. We are always fighting and it drains me every time. It's not that my love for Jones is gone, but I don't want to be treated like this anymore. I just hope he doesn't lash out on me like last time. What should I do to end my relationship with Jones without getting hurt again?



*Sammi's Final Response:* Hi it's Sammi. I've decided to spend as much time as possible with my community group. It helps to keep me away from Jones. Well, it is also because I reported Jones to the police. We went to court, and now he has a restraining order. Some friends from my group have noticed I've been acting different, so I told them about what happened. They were worried at first, but were glad that I was ok and safe. It was nice talking to you. Thank you for everything!

## Owen Boone

*Owen's Biography:* My name is Owen and I like the outdoors. I will be a senior next year. I am in ROTC at my school and I want to become an officer in the Marine Corps.

*Gender:* Male

*Age:* 17

*Birthday:* November 21



*Owen's Stress:* Hi there, it's Owen. I had a really long day. After school, I spent three hours at the shooting range. I'm brushing up on my marksmanship for the next regional competition for ROTC. It takes all of my concentration, so I usually turn my phone off. When I turned it back on today, my girlfriend Riley had texted and called me about a hundred times. So on top of worrying about my upcoming competition, I'm also stressed about Riley. At first, her messages were nice and said, "What's up?" and "Where are you?" But then she started sending me things like "Why don't you answer your phone, idiot?" and "I'm your girlfriend, normal people answer their phones for their girlfriends." I have enough to worry about without having to think about her being mad at me. I don't like that she's always wanting to text, even though she knows I'm practicing my shooting. How can I make her understand that I won't be able to text her most days after school?



*Owen's Health Challenge:* Hey, it's Owen again. I had a pretty rough day today again. I was at the shooting range as usual when Riley came in and interrupted me. "What are you doing in here?" She asked. I told her I was practicing and she said, "What for? You'll never be good enough to even place at one of those competitions. You're wasting your time doing this stuff." I told her it was important to me and she just laughed at me. She just stood there and laughed right in my face. I didn't know what to do. I've always thought that the relationship Riley and I have is just different than other people's. But the more I think about it, our "different" isn't a good thing. She yells at me and calls me names. She talks down to me and belittles me, but I love her. There's no one else out there for me. What should I do so that she stops making me feel so worthless?



*Owen's Alert:* Your avatar is in an **abusive relationship**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Owen's Advocacy Challenge:* Hi, it's Owen. Thanks for the advice you gave me. I talked with Riley, but things actually got worse. The regional competition is just around the corner and I'm really excited about it. Now the only problem is Riley's Aunt is getting married, and Riley wants someone to have on her arm at the wedding to show off. Guess what day the wedding is? You got it, the same day as my competition. I tried to talk to Riley about how important the competition is to me, but she downplayed it like she always does. Either I could go with her to the wedding or she would dump me. I don't know what to do. I don't want to lose her from my life, but I was really looking forward to showing off my skills. I don't want all those hours I spent at the range to be for nothing. How can I make Riley understand that my competition is important to me and that she should respect that I have a life too?



*Owen's Final Response:* Hey again, I made my decision right before the wedding. I went to my competition. Not only did I go, but I also won!!! I got the gold medal in marksmanship. I can't believe how much of a confidence boost that was. I still see Riley in the hallways sometimes. I tried to wave at her once in a while, but I was just met with a sneer and an upturned nose. I guess that means our relationship is over, but that's ok. I don't need that kind of negativity in my life. Thank you for all of your advice, you were a great friend!

**Yasmine Cruz**

*Yasmine's Biography:* Aloha! I have recently moved here to Denver from Honolulu, Hawaii and I'm still getting used to the way of things off the island. I like to meet new friends, and I'm a HUGE dog person. I love my dog Spot. I couldn't have asked for a better companion.

*Gender:* Female

*Age:* 16

*Birthday:* April 3



*Yasmine's Stress:* What's up yo? That's what the kids at school say. Back in Honolulu, we would say "Aloha" or just a simple "Hello." Things are so different here in Colorado. It is so beautiful and I love the mountains. The kids at school are very different. I haven't made any friends yet. But then again, it's only my first week. My favorite class is my literature class. There is a girl named Ray in that class. She seems really cool and down to earth. I think I'll try talking to her tomorrow. What can I say to her to start a conversation?



*Yasmine's Health Challenge:* Hey, it's Yasmine again. So I talked to Ray and she is really cool. We both like the same kind of music, clothes, and activities. I still haven't made more friends. In fact, I think I made some enemies. Last week in science class, I was partnered with this boy named Jack. He was really nice and made me feel like I could actually start fitting into the school. After class, I was telling him about my home and what it was like living in Hawaii. His girlfriend, Megan, saw us talking and interrupted. She said Jack had somewhere to be and he needed to leave. I saw her talking with her friends after school. I knew they were talking about me by the way they all stared when I walked by. She also posted something on Facebook that I knew was about me. She had written, "This new girl at school thinks she's all that! Thinks she can just come in and steal my boyfriend, oh no you didn't!" I'm not stealing anyone's boyfriend! I was just trying to make a new friend! Should I confront her and tell her I'm not causing any trouble? What do you think I should do?



*Yasmine's Alert:* Your avatar is being **cyber bullied**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Yasmine's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey it's Yasmine. Things haven't gotten better with Megan. In fact, things are getting a lot worse. In math class last week, Megan decided to snap some pictures of me when I wasn't looking and post them on Facebook. I looked so stupid, and I was scratching my nose in one of them. Everyone liked them! Ray told me to blow it off since Megan is just that kind of person. I'm still embarrassed to even walk down the hallways. I honestly wish I was back in Honolulu, but I know that's impossible. Jack isn't nearly as friendly in science anymore, and he never talks to me after class. What can I do to get Megan to stop picking on me? If that fails, who can I ask to help me deal with Megan?



*Yasmine's Final Response:* Hey. I want to thank you for the advice you gave me. Ray told me I should report Megan to the school, so we went to file a report to my counselor. I was asked to print out the pages where Megan had made fun of me, so I went home and made some copies. I turned those in, and Megan got called into the office and got suspended for a week. After that, she stopped taking pictures of me and started to keep to herself. I'm glad she has stopped. Anyways, Ray asked me to sleep over the other night. It was really fun and we watched movies all night. Megan hasn't done anything new, but her and her friends still stare when I walk by. Jack has been talking to me more in science again. I know things aren't perfect, but I at least know Megan will leave me alone. So I wanted to thank you for what you told me. Your advice helped a lot. It's nice to have someone to lean on.

# Nutrition & Physical Fitness

## Brody Jenkins

*Brody's Biography:* Yo, my name is Brody and I have a job mowing lawns around the neighborhood. I'm really close with my younger brother Cam. Also, I love to watch professional football.

*Gender:* Male      *Age:* 14      *Birthday:* April 9



*Brody's Stress:* Hey, it's Brody! What's up? How have you been? I'm doing alright I guess. There's this really cool football camp that's coming up soon. It looks like four days of awesomeness! I've been looking forward to this for a long time. I've saved every penny from mowing lawns last summer just so I can go. I barely have enough money to cover the registration fee and last week my parents asked if they could borrow \$100. I'm really stressed now because I really want to go to this camp, but there's no way I'll have enough money by the time it starts. I don't really know what to do. How can I make my parents understand that I really want to spend my money on football camp without them getting mad?



*Brody's Health Challenge:* Hi, it's Brody again; it's been awhile since we last talked. So you know how I told you about my parents wanting to borrow that money from me? Well, I found out why they asked. Apparently, my dad lost his job, so my parents didn't have enough money for groceries. I thought our food stamps were supposed to help with that, but I guess not. It's just so irritating that my parents have to borrow money from me right now of all times. I know it's selfish, but I really wanted to go to that football camp. But we are running very low on food. I guess I'll have to help my parents out, but how can I help find our next meal?



*Brody's Alert:* Your avatar is dealing with **food insecurity**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Brody's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey again, it's Brody. Thanks for the advice you gave me, it helped a lot! Now there's another problem. My brother Cam is only four and doesn't understand what's happening with our family. He is constantly asking for more food at dinner and snacks before and afterward. I try to give him as much as I can, but there are three other people who have to eat in this house. It just kills me to hear his growling stomach when he falls asleep at night. Of course, every night at my house is a symphony of growling stomachs, but Cam's sounds different. Its sound echoes through the halls like a ghost that haunts us all. I still don't know what to do or where to go to get some more help for my family. How can I make sure Cam and the rest of us have enough to eat?



*Brody's Final Response:* Hi, it's Brody! It's been a long time since I talked to you last. I really appreciate what you did for me and my family. My dad got another job. He's not earning the same pay rate as he was with his last job, but the money is enough to put food back on the table. We no longer need all of our food stamps, and the nightly symphony has been silenced. Times were tough, and I'm glad you were the one to help me out. Thank you so much!

## Danil Mamon

*Danil's Biography:* Hey, I'm Danil Mamon. I really like working with metal. My favorite class is woodshop. I really want to go back to my parents' homeland in Slovakia when I graduate.

*Gender:* Male      *Age:* 17      *Birthday:* October 8



*Danil's Stress:* Hey there, it's Danil! How's it going? I'm super stoked for this year; I'll be taking an advanced placement 3D art class and woodshop! They're my two favorite classes, and I'm really excited to improve my handy work. Woodshop is really interesting. We get to use different materials like wood, metal and resin to create different works of art for various prompts. When I work on an assignment, I put my whole heart into it and spend pretty much all of my time on it. It sometimes gets to the point where if I'm at school and still working on my project, I just grab a quick snack from the vending machine and go back to woodshop. For dinner, I just grab whatever is in the pantry. My dad yells at me all the time because he says I'm not eating a proper meal, but whatever. Creating sculptures is truly my passion. But I can't concentrate on my work with my dad always nagging. To top it off, I have to present my project and presenting makes me so nervous. I hate speaking in front of the whole class and knowing all eyes are on me. How should I confront my dad to let me do my work without him getting even more mad? And so that he stops making me more nervous than I already am?



*Danil's Health Challenge:* Hey there! Danil again. How have you been doing? I've been doing all right, just been working really hard on our current project. My dad is still nagging at me to eat dinner, but he doesn't yell as much. By the way, the assignment I'm working on is to make a sculpture that encompasses our ethnic roots, so I've been talking to my grandfather a lot about Slovakia, which is great! I've been working on it non-stop though. My friends in my class say that I've been putting on some weight because of my extreme dedication to my projects. One of my friends even said that I'm getting "pudgy"... I didn't really notice it until she pointed it out. I don't think it's that bad though. I just don't eat super healthy because I don't have the time to dedicate to pursuing balanced meals. My art is so important to me; it's just easier to eat fast food or whatever is in my house. Also, my sister pointed out to me that I tend to eat even worse foods when I get anxious; she calls them my "comfort foods", when I need to relax before presenting. Do you think I have a problem? How can I add healthier foods to my diet and still be able to work on my projects?



*Danil's Alert:* Your avatar is struggling with **obesity due to improper nutrition**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Danil's Advocacy Challenge:* Hi! Are things good with you? They're getting pretty intense with me. Thanks for all of your advice. I'm happy to report that my art classes are going really well! The project about my roots turned out really great! I loved the finished project, but I don't feel like my presentation fully explained what it meant to me. My eating habits have gotten worse, too. I tried to control my impulse to get quick easy food, and it helped a little bit. Also my sister has helped me to not eat so much junk food when I'm stressed. However, it's so difficult to eat right when I'm working on my projects because I just eat for convenience. I tried to talk to my parents about having healthier food in our house, but it's difficult because they are also really busy and don't necessarily have time to cook super healthy meals for all of us. I'm really struggling because I don't want to be overweight and unhealthy but it's so hard to eat quality food! I need your help. How can I convince my parents to buy healthier foods?



*Danil's Final Response:* Hi friend! Sorry it's been so long, I've been so busy! Thank you so much for all of your help and compassion, it's really been helpful. The year is coming to an end, and my art classes are almost over. I've gotten a little better with presenting in class; I've gained a little bit of confidence while speaking, because I want people to know how much my works mean to me. I still get self-conscious when people are looking at my body though. My eating has improved. I talked to my parents again about having healthier food in our house, and when we can, and we go to the store together and pick out food that our entire family wants to eat. I still struggle sometimes though, when I'm stressed and I end up eating junk food and unhealthy snacks. I've also set aside some time to walk and jog in the afternoon. Every day is a new situation I have to overcome, but I'm glad that I have friends and family who are willing to help me, and that I have a passion to focus on. Your support meant so much to me; I hope everything is going spectacular with you! Have a great rest of your year!

## Maia Florence

*Maia's Biography:* Hi, my name is Maia. I play violin and really like to perform in orchestra concerts with my school. I am in the running for a violin scholarship for college. I also really enjoy drawing and painting. I go to an arts school and I am the president of student council. Someday, I want to be an elementary school art teacher.

*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 18      *Birthday:* November 3



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*Maia's Stress:* Hey it's Maia. How are things going? Things are okay from my part. It could be better, my family and I have been having difficulties lately. Now that I'm 18, a lot of responsibilities have been left in my hands. My parents tell me that I need to help out and do chores while they are at work. It's hard to deal with graduation around the corner and still having time to practice playing the violin. There have been rumors that there is a scholarship available for students who have a high GPA and play the violin. It just seems like there is so much going on, all of it feels extremely overwhelming and difficult to manage. I just wish I didn't have so much pressure, especially from my parents. How can I tell them that my grades and violin practice comes first?



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*Maia's Health Challenges:* Hey, Maia again, it's been a long time. I've been so stressed. Things at home haven't changed. I feel the need to do so much in such little time, and my parents haven't been much help. They are now telling me I look fat, just because I'm inside all the time doing homework or practicing my violin. But what if I really do look chubby? With graduation coming up, I would like to lose weight before then. I don't want people to stare at me, and it'll be harder to even attempt to lose weight. I can't seem to find the time to exercise since I have been working and I always have so much to do. I don't know how I can lose weight when I have all of these other things going on. If I focus on my health, then all of the other things I am committed to will fall apart and vice versa, it just seems like a lose-lose situation right now. What do you think I should do to try and lose weight while also keep up with all my homework and practice?



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*Maia's Alert:* Your avatar is struggling with being **overweight due to lack of exercise**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



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*Maia's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey it's me. Thank you for the advice. Things are still difficult, but on the bright side, I don't have to do homework again for a while. This has given me more time to focus on more important things. I've been taking the opportunity to practice my violin skills, in hopes of being considered for that scholarship. I feel really great right now! The only thing that I am still having trouble with is becoming fit. I signed up to go to a gym, but I don't really like it. I always feel like I am being judged and just feel out of place. I've gone once a week and I don't see a difference. It seems like I am doing something wrong. I've been debating to just give it up, because I feel it's kinda pointless. What other ways are there that I could try to lose weight faster? Any fun suggestions?



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*Maia's Final Response:* Hey, Maia one last time. Things have actually been looking up for me. Everything has been settling down and I have found more time for me. It was hard at first, but my mom and I had a heart-to-heart talk about how my weight had affected me throughout the last part of my senior year. She motivated me to be more dedicated about going to the gym. I've even been working with a trainer. In total, I've lost 3 pounds. I still find it a hassle to go to the gym, but we'll see how it goes from here. I think I am beginning to feel more comfortable. I now have more hope that I can reach my goal by graduation! Thank you for everything.

## Rachel Hernandez

*Rachel's Biography:* Hello! I'm Rachel. I love to cook! My dream job would be to become a professional chef, I think that would be soooo cool! If not, my dream is to have my own show on the Food Network! My favorite TV show, hands down, is Friends. My family owns some land, and I own a horse named Danny.

*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 16      *Birthday:* January 28



*Rachel's Stress:* Hey there! It's Rachel! How are you? I've been doing pretty good myself, but I actually wanted to talk to you about something. I noticed that my friends have started wearing a lot of nice clothes recently. They've been going shopping a lot without me and buying lots of new stuff. It wasn't a huge deal to me at first, but now I'm starting to feel like my clothes are a little worn out and not so trendy. I just want to fit in better with my friends and their new style, because they always look so cute!! But the thing is, I've never been a very big fan of shopping. I'd much rather spend my free time riding my horse! I'm not really sure what to do, but I want to feel like I fit in with my friends again. What can I do to get my friends to include me more often in what they do?



*Rachel's Health Challenge:* Hey, it's me, Rachel again. I need to talk to someone, maybe you can help me? Remember when I told you about wanting to fit in with my friends and their new style? Well, I asked if I could join them on their next shopping trip, and it really didn't turn out too well for me. Nothing I tried on would fit me. My friends looked good in everything they tried on, but I couldn't bring myself to come out of the dressing room. I realized that most of the clothes my friends looked great in didn't look so good on me because of my belly. It made me feel so embarrassed about myself. I never really thought that maybe I have an unhealthy lifestyle. But ever since that shopping trip, I've started to feel really self-conscious about my size. I don't know what I should do! How can I get a nicer body and look like the rest of my friends?



*Rachel's Alert:* Your avatar is struggling with **obesity due to genetics**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Rachel's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey again. Thanks for all of your advice. Soon after I talked to you, my friends started telling me about this new diet they were starting and wanted me to start the diet too. I decided that it would be a good idea, because my friends all look so good and make it look easy. Ever since the shopping trip a while ago, I've wanted to do everything I can to look as good as they do. Being on the diet means that I haven't really been eating very much lately other than fruits and veggies for a small lunch and dinner. My friends and I don't even eat anything for breakfast anymore. A lot of times I feel really hungry for more food, but I guess that's probably a good sign that this diet is working. My mom has noticed that I haven't been eating as much as I used to, and keeps telling me that everyone in our family is "big-boned." But I don't want to be like the rest of my family! I want to lose weight, but my mom keeps telling me to stop starving myself and it's getting on my nerves. She has no faith in me. But it has started to make me wonder if maybe I'm just genetically big. My friends and I have been on this diet for three weeks now, and I feel like I should've lost weight by now, but I haven't, and it's starting to worry me. I thought I was doing well for myself by eating better and exercising more, but maybe I need to do even more! Or maybe I need a different diet than my friends, but who can I ask for help? Maybe I can ask a doctor, but what kinds of questions should I ask him/her in order to find out how to combat my weight problem?



*Rachel's Final Response:* Hi!! I just wanted to thank you for giving me so much advice lately! It really helped to give me the courage to explain to my mom what my concerns were about my weight and asked her if she could take me to the doctor to get some help. She helped to set up an appointment, and my doctor was great. I explained to her what I was doing to try and lose weight, and how it wasn't working. I had blood drawn to see if anything was wrong, but everything came out fine. She explained to me all about the role that my genes could be playing in my weight. She told me that even though there is really nothing I can do to fix that, I can still do lots of things to make sure I am eating and exercising in a way that is healthy for me. I still have a lot of work to do to incorporate my doctor's suggestions, but I'm not so worried about what my friends think anymore. I realize now that their diet was really unhealthy for me, and that not all bodies work or are the same. It's ok to be a little bit bigger! Thanks again for all your help! It's been so nice talking to you!

**Fiona Tate**

*Fiona's Biography:* Hi, I'm Fiona. I really like to write. I especially like writing poetry and short stories. I want to join the Peace Corps for a year after high school and then go to college for journalism. I volunteer at the zoo every weekend and also volunteer at my local dog shelter.

*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 16      *Birthday:* September 28



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*Fiona's Stress:* Hello there! It's so nice to talk to you. How are you? I'm doing good, just super busy! I've been writing a lot lately. I'm taking a really cool literature class and the teacher is awesome. It's so nice to have a class that you really enjoy. Her writing prompts are creative and get me thinking. They're challenging, but that's the fun part! I've also been doing a lot of work at the zoo on the weekends. As you can probably tell, I don't really spend a lot of time at home. I just like doing my own thing. Plus, my parents never really ask where I am. I've never really had a connection with them. I've thought about trying to connect with them more lately, but they don't really give me the time of day. Like last week, I was telling them about feeding the lion at the zoo and they didn't show any interest. They only asked me to do the dishes and take out the trash. They never even asked how my day was or what I did! How can I get my parents to really listen to me and pay more attention to what I do? Showing a little interest would be nice!



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*Fiona's Health Challenge:* Hello, how are you doing? I've been doing all right, just super busy. So my parents are working on trying to talk to me more often. But now, I have been writing non-stop to the point where I don't even go to the zoo on the weekends to help out anymore. I keep saying that I'll go back next week, but then I never do. I've noticed that I've been gaining some weight and maybe it's because I'm not as active anymore, but also I haven't been eating well lately. My parents say that I need to go outside more often. But it's not my fault! I just haven't had time. Hopefully I'll be finished with my writing so I can start volunteering and eating right again. I don't want to gain weight and start getting funny looks from people. I'll just lose the weight when I go back to the zoo and volunteer again! But until then, what can I do to keep myself at a normal weight?



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*Fiona's Alert:* Your avatar is having trouble **taking responsibility for healthy eating**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



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*Fiona's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey how's it going? So things have been going well. I started working at the zoo on the weekends again and continue to write, just not as much. That way, I can balance both. One the downside, I have gained 11lbs since the last time we talked. It's really not my fault though. I'm just usually running late to school or to the zoo so I grab fast food on my way. It's fast, and that's what I need. I know it's not healthy, but there's nothing I can do. I have to keep myself busy. How can I stop myself from eating such bad foods?



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*Fiona's Final Response:* Hello! Thank you for your advice, it really helped. I have realized that the unhealthy eating was my fault and I could stop it. Well, more like reduce it. I didn't take responsibility and just blamed it on my schedule, when I could have done something about it. I've started packing my own lunches and I have been trying to put more time and effort into making my meals more nutritious. I've learned that it's important to stay healthy and this was a huge lesson. I have started to lose some weight and it will take some more time to get back to normal. I just hope this doesn't happen again! Thank you so much.

## Abigail Beal

*Abigail's Biography:* Hey my name is Abigail, and I would love to travel, but the farthest I've ever been from home is Kansas. My lifelong dream is to help and teach children in third world countries. Even though my high school is pretty small, our cheer team is well known for their awesomeness. I hope to make the team this year.

*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 17      *Birthday:* November 21



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*Abigail's Stress:* Hey it's Abigail, how are you? I feel like it's been a good summer, but I'm excited to go back to school again! I miss my friends and school events. Football season is coming up, and football is HUGE at my school! But since football season is around the corner, that means that the varsity cheer team is having tryouts soon. I really want to try out, but I'm nervous because I don't think I fit in with all the other cheer girls. They are all popular and have boyfriends on the football team. I've never really talked to any of them... maybe they think I'm weird. But I really don't want to psych myself out. I've been practicing my routine, but I'm not sure if it's good enough. Do you have any advice for me so I can get into the cheer team?



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*Abigail's Health Challenge:* Hey, how have you been? I've been feeling pretty insecure lately. I've been buying health and fitness magazines and I've been trying to watch what I eat. I guess you can call it dieting. I started watching my weight because I want to look like all the other girls trying out. They are all so slender and pretty, just like all the models in my magazines! I don't want to be the black sheep and have people making fun of me. My mom's been worried because she says I've "changed," ever since she found my stack of magazines. But I just want to fit in! I've lost a lot of weight and almost look as thin as the girls in my magazines. I can't wait to look pretty; I've even bought a lot of cute new clothes and got my nails done yesterday! I want to be like the cheer girls, they look like they have fun!! But what if what my mom says about me changing is bad? I don't want her to be worried about me. What can I do to not make sure my mom isn't worried about how I look?



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*Abigail's Alert:* Your avatar is struggling with unhealthy weight loss, due to wanting to look like the stereotypical cheerleader because of **media influences**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



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*Abigail's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey there. Do you want me to give you the good news or the bad news first? Well, the bad news is I didn't make the cheer team this round like most of the girls. The good news is that I do have another chance because I got a call back from the coach that she'll save me a spot for the second tryouts. I'm still disappointed with myself because I thought I could do it. Even the girls on the team were cheering for me. I also realized that I tried so hard to fit in with all the popular cheer girls and to be likeable in their eyes, that I didn't even focus on my actual routine and talent. I thought that looks meant more to them than if I accidentally messed up a few times in the tryout! I'm so embarrassed and don't know if I should even do the second tryout. My mom is still telling me that I should eat more and stop worrying about what other people think of me. Maybe she's right, because the cheer girls probably don't even care about how I look. But now I'm underweight, and I'm not sure how to gain weight again in a healthy way. Who can I ask to find out how to gain weight in a healthy way? What questions can I ask on how to still be healthy?



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*Abigail's Final Response:* Hey!! I ended up making it onto the varsity cheer team, even though it's not the position I wanted. Thanks for all the advice you've given me throughout this stage in my life. You have really helped me realize that looks don't mean everything, and much less if it means I'm going to be unhealthy. My mom has helped me eat healthier foods to gain some weight again, and I'm happier than ever. I also made a few close friends that I met on the team! It's so much fun being part of a group; they're all so sweet and funny! If I had to take one thing away from this experience, it would be that no one has to "fit the part" in order to do what they want. If you want to do it, do it! Don't let insecurities bring you down. Again, thank you! I couldn't have done it without you! Xoxo.

**Mike Leech**

*Mike's Biography:* Sup, I'm Mike. I like football and MMA. I love to win. When I graduate, I want to play for Texas A&M.

*Gender:* Male      *Age:* 16      *Birthday:* June 24



*Mike's Stress:* Hey what's up? It's Mike. Things have been going pretty solid. Football tryouts are next Wednesday. I'm pretty pumped. My dad got the new job as head coach, so that's pretty cool. Well, actually it's not that cool. It makes me really nervous to think about him watching me almost all the time. He hasn't said anything, but I know he expects me to make varsity this year as a sophomore. But the senior guys are so big and ripped. I need to start pushing myself when I work out if I want to play with them. That way, I can also make my dad proud. What can I do to prepare myself for tryouts?



*Mike's Health Challenge:* Hey, it's me Mike. Tryouts were two weeks ago. My dad had me practice with the seniors. Those guys hit so hard when they tackle. I could hardly walk afterwards. Last week in the locker rooms, I overheard two of my teammates talking. They were taking pills to make them get bigger and be able to play harder. I went and asked about it later that day. Jim, the kid with the pills said I could have some for free. I can already feel a change. It feels good, and I'm starting to grow bigger muscles. I don't want to stop taking them, even though I've heard they are bad for you. But I will be able to easily play on varsity soon. What do you think about it? Are steroids really as bad as people say they are? What even makes them bad?



*Mike's Alert:* Your avatar has been taking illegal **steroids** to enhance his playing skills, but does not know the negative effects it could have on his body. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Mike's Advocacy Challenge:* I have a serious problem. I've been taking the pills for two months now. I made varsity easily, and I'm stronger than ever before. Our first game is in a week. I couldn't be more ready. Except, Jim told me he heard that steroids could mess up our reproductive system. That's crazy! We're too young to be infertile! He also said it could really damage our hormonal balance. Maybe all these steroids aren't worth taking... My dad will be so disappointed and I probably won't get into Texas A&M one day. But they have really helped me to get into varsity. Plus, I feel weird when I don't take the pills. I need help. I need it fast. What should I do to get off the pills, yet still be able to play?



*Mike's Final Response:* Hey it's me. I decided to stop taking the pills before they affected me. I may have to train harder to keep myself in condition, but at least I will stay healthy. We won at our last game and my dad couldn't be happier! We have another game this weekend and I'm really excited for it! Wish me luck, and thanks for the help. It was needed.

## Blair Thompson

*Blair's Biography:* Hi! I'm Blair! I love Japanese anime and would love to maybe illustrate a graphic novel one day. I'm an only child and live at home with my mom, my dad, and my grandma.

*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 17      *Birthday:* February 22



*Blair's Stress:* Hello, I'm Blair. How are you doing today? Probably great, I bet. I'm doing pretty fine myself today. Ugh, I'm just so tired lately, my ma wants me to get a job so I can start helping out around the house. I don't really want to, I'll be even more tired and I've been getting so sick. I'll get some pretty bad headaches throughout the day. I'm not sure why, but I hope it goes away soon. Sometimes I'll skip breakfast because school starts way too early. I'm not even hungry at 6 am! But I'll still try my hardest to find a job. We need the money so bad to take care of grandma and pay her medical bills. I don't know if I could handle it, but I have to try. I really love my grandma, and I hate seeing her so sick. But while I find a job, how can I help grandma to make sure she doesn't get any more sick? It's starting to really worry me.



*Blair's Health Challenge:* Hey, it's Blair again. Great news! I finally got a job, it's really hard work but the money really helps to pay for my grandma's medical bills. Even grandma is happy and proud of me. I should be happy, but I have no energy anymore, like even less than before. When I work, I feel like passing out. I can't focus and I almost lose my balance, and that happens all the time. My weight has been going down too, I'm only 99lbs now, and I'm turning pale. I don't have enough money to go visit the doctor and having this happen to me is really scary. What do you think I should do while I save up to go to the doctor?



*Blair's Alert:* Your avatar has been getting sick due to the **consequences of an unhealthy diet**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Blair's Advocacy Challenge:* Hi, I'm back, I have to tell you something that happened to me two days ago. I was at work, and today I had to skip breakfast even though we had plenty of food, and I passed out. I had to go to the hospital and they told me that I was malnourished. I had to take food through an IV to be able to walk again. The doctor said that I need to stop drinking so much coffee throughout the day and start eating more nutritious meals. I have to eat healthier food, but I'm not sure what I should add or take away from my diet. I'm going to start to gain some weight, so I can get my energy back. I'm just nervous about being able to eat enough to keep me going throughout the day. How should I plan out my meals to fit my busy schedule? What kinds of foods can I eat to keep my energy levels up?



*Blair's Final Response:* Hello, I just want to check back with you again. I'm so much better than before. My malnourishment is pretty much gone. I have to eat so much now, and sometimes I feel weird. I now make sure that I eat three times a day with some snacks here and there. I wish I knew how to pick what to eat before, but learning this is good so that I don't end up in a hospital again. I want to say thanks for all the information that you found for me, it helped me get things going again.

# Sexual Health

**Jasmine Ladd**

*Jasmine's Biography:* Hi, I'm Jasmine. I'm a junior, and I'm on the cheer team. I want to be the varsity cheer captain next year. In the future, I want to be a journalist and work for CNN. I moved to Colorado from California two years ago and I miss the ocean!

*Gender:* Female

*Age:* 17

*Birthday:* August 29



*Jasmine's Stress:* Hey, It's Jasmine! How have you been?!? Lately I've been hanging out with these new friends from my cheer team and we go to a lot of parties and concerts. I use to never do those things with my old friends, and I also never hung out with the girls from my cheer team. I guess I just wasn't that close to them until this year. Like we would go to lunch sometimes, but we never hung out outside of school. I like my new friends. We have a great time. There's this really cute boy at these parties that I see here and there. He's the captain of the football team. I really want to get the cheer captain position for this year so maybe he will notice me. I just want to fit in and get a cute boyfriend. Should I approach him? But what should I talk to him about? How can I keep the conversation going?



*Jasmine's Health Challenge:* Hey, so remember how I told you I had a crush on that guy that I use to see at parties all the time? Well, turns out he thought I was cute too. We started talking at this party I went to last weekend. He asked me to come upstairs with him and I didn't want to say no, so I did. One thing led to another, and before I knew it, we had sex. That was my first time and I never thought it would be with a guy I just started talking to. He hasn't talked to me since that night, and it's been three weeks. To make matters even worse, I took a pregnancy test yesterday and found out that I'm pregnant. I don't know what to do!!! I don't even know much about this guy and I haven't talked to him in forever. I can't tell him and I can't tell my parents. I honestly don't know what to do! I'm freaking out!! Do you have any advice?



*Jasmine's Alert:* Your avatar is **pregnant**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Jasmine's Advocacy Challenge:* Hi, thanks for the advice you gave me earlier in the week. I told him about the pregnancy, and he told all his friends that some random girl came up to him and said that he knocked her up and now everyone in the school thinks I'm crazy. To make matters even worse, everyone knows I'm pregnant. He knows it was him! I don't know what to do. I feel like I'm going through this on my own and I wish I never had sex with him in the first place. It was such a mistake! I don't want to be alone. Help! I've never felt so embarrassed. All my cheer friends are even starting to call me a liar. I thought that they would at least be on my side, but they are worried about their image and can't afford to be seen with the lying pregnant girl... I don't even know what to do with myself. I just want to lock myself in my room and cry. This is the biggest obstacle that has ever come into my life. Who can I talk to? What should my next move be?



*Jasmine's Final Response:* Hey! So things have gotten better. Your advice really helped. He finally owned up to being the father, and the whole school doesn't think I'm a complete liar. The cheer girls have been more supportive, and so have my parents. Yeah, I decided to tell them. Thank you so much for everything you've done for me in this hard part of my life. If I could do one thing to change it all, I wouldn't have had sex that night. I was not mentally and physically ready. Hope you are well! Xoxo

**Ven Edwards**

*Ven's Biography:* Hey, I'm Ven. I love to hike, mountain bike, and cliff jump. I have long blonde hair and I'm a vegan. I've been dating my girlfriend, Nadia, for two years now.

*Gender:* Male      *Age:* 17      *Birthday:* September 5



*Ven's Stress:* Hey, it's Ven. How are you doing? I've been doing pretty well myself, well... kinda. It's probably nothing, but my girlfriend Nadia hasn't really been talking to me lately. We've gotten in fights before, but this time it was different. The other day, she started freaking out about how I should start being more committed and all of this other stuff. It came out of nowhere, and it's making me confused. I don't really know what's up. Anyway, it might not be a big deal. What's the best way to ask her what's going on and confront her? I'm worried about arguing and making her mad again, so I could use your help.



*Ven's Health Challenge:* Hey, it's me. I really need to talk to somebody right now. I really don't know how to say this, but I just talked to Nadia. I figured out why she hadn't been talking to me and why she yelled at me the other day...she's pregnant. I'm REALLY scared. I didn't know what to say to her! I don't know if I should tell my parents. I don't want to be a dad yet!!!! I hope Nadia doesn't think I'll leave her, but a baby is a huge responsibility. I don't think either of us are ready for this. What should we do to prepare ourselves to become parents?



*Ven's Alert:* Your avatar's girlfriend is **pregnant**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Ven's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey again. Thanks for the advice you gave me. Nadia and I have been talking over the past couple days, and we're arguing about whether or not we're ready to be parents. I really value my relationship with Nadia, and I don't want to lose her. I still don't know how to progress. What do you think our next step is?



*Ven's Final Response:* Hi again. Thanks for all the advice that you've given me so far. We told our families, and they're disappointed but supportive of whatever we decide to do. Regardless of the choice we decide to make, Nadia and I both feel that we've learned from our actions. We now know how difficult these situations can be, and we have certainly grown from ours.

## Sydney Cartwright

*Sydney's Biography:* Hello! I'm Sydney and I'm obsessed with geode hunting! I feel at peace in nature, and someday I want to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro.

*Gender:* Female

*Age:* 17

*Birthday:* June 3



*Sydney's Stress:* Hi! I'm Sydney. How is your day going so far? Mine is so wonderful, my boyfriend Joseph and I are going to celebrate our 6 month anniversary tonight and it just so happens to be Prom night as well. I love him so much and I'm so happy that we are together. Our plan is to take photos for Prom with our parents, but then drive up to Winter Park. My parents don't know about it, but I think everything will be okay! I am so excited to get away with Joseph, it will be our first night alone plus he rented us a cabin. I'll probably miss the time to study for a test but I can always make it up. I'm not doing so hot in my physics class and really need to pass this test, but I also don't want to cancel my date. How can I study and still have time to spend with Joseph?



*Sydney's Health Challenge:* Hi, it's Sydney, I'm sorry we haven't chatted in a while, I went through a little scare but everything is fine. Remember how I told you about my 6 month anniversary with Joseph? Well, we were alone in the cabin when he pushed me to the bed and said he loved me, I guess you could say that things escalated. The next day, I went out and bought some pregnancy tests but everything is fine now. Joseph and I think that we can do it again; I mean I won't get pregnant, right? Why should I bother having protection?



*Sydney's Alert:* Your avatar does not know why it is necessary to use **protection and why have it**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Sydney's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey, I'm back! It's just me, Sydney. Joseph and I are getting closer to our 7 month anniversary. We are both so excited; he says he's planning something romantic for us. I told my friend Betty about how far we have gotten, and she called me stupid. That's not ok. Having sex was my choice, and I don't think I'll get pregnant. I know he's been with other girls, but he means so much to me. I really think that he is the one, so I think it's my choice on whether or not to be with him. Betty said he could have something from being with so many other girls, but I think he would have told me, right? She also said that I should have used protection, but should I? I understand the consequences, but sometimes I just don't understand what other risks there are. I think I should visit a doctor, just to be safe. Maybe they could give me information on having safe sex. How do I talk to Joseph so we can be more careful about our health?



*Sydney's Final Response:* Hello, it's Sydney. So I told Joseph that we should use protection and be more careful about our health. He agreed and said sorry for pressuring me and not caring more about our health. Now, we go to the doctor for checkups and are more careful. I'm so glad that our relationship has grown stronger, thanks to your advice. Well, I have to go now; Joseph and I are going to the movies. Bye bye.

**Emmanuel Romero**

*Emmanuel's Biography:* Hey, I'm Emanuel! I'm a freshman, and I love to read! My all-time favorite book is *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. I'm very involved in my church youth group. Next summer, we are going to Brazil for a mission.

*Gender:* Male      *Age:* 15      *Birthday:* April 14



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*Emmanuel's Stress:* Hey! It's Emmanuel, how've you been? I have been good. Today was kind of a weird day for me. I have been dating this girl named Susie for a while now. My friends are always telling me that I should take it to the next level with her. I don't agree with my friends, because in my church youth group, they always tell us that losing your virginity should be when you find someone you love and after you marry them and I completely agree. But what if I tell Susie what I believe in and thinks I'm weird? How can I make her understand that it's ok to wait for intercourse?



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*Emmanuel's Health Challenge:* Hi, it's Emmanuel again. I just came home from my youth group and today was a fun day. You remember Susie, my girlfriend I mentioned earlier? Well, she's been hinting that she wants to take things to the next level. I don't what to do at this point. I want to wait until marriage, but I don't think Susie wants to stick around and wait until I'm ready. I don't want to lose her. How can I convince her to wait?



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*Emmanuel's Alert:* Your avatar wants to practice **abstinence**, but is feeling sexual pressure from Susie. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



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*Emmanuel's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey, it's been awhile. Things are fine at my church youth group. Susie and I are great. We have been spending a lot of time together, but she still wants what I'm not ready for... I definitely love her and want to, but I don't think it's the right thing to do. Losing her is the last thing I would want right now. I still am really confused on what to do. What should I tell Susie to convince her that abstinence is ok in a relationship?



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*Emmanuel's Final Response:* Hey, Emmanuel again. Today was a little rough. I finally convinced Susie that we should stay abstinent. It feels too soon, and would prefer to wait at least until we are a little older. I would still like to get married first, but Susie tried to work with me and said she'll wait. Thank you for everything, you were a great person to talk to.

## Ricky Ajmura

*Ricky's Biography:* Yo, what's up? I'm Ricky. I love to snowboard, and I love listening to Jay-Z. One day, I want to travel to Europe and study architecture.

*Gender:* Male

*Age:* 17

*Birthday:* March 7



*Ricky's Stress:* Hey! Ricky here. What's up with you? I'm doing well right now. I got back from a snowboarding trip to the mountains a few weeks ago with some of my best friends. It was really fun! Now we are back at school and it's going well. My classes aren't that difficult, but I've kind of been missing a lot of school. I haven't been feeling that great, so I've been at the doctor's pretty frequently. They're trying to figure out why I feel so poorly, but it's taking a long time. On top of that, my girlfriend and I broke up a few months ago and it is still making me sad. It turned out she was cheating on me with some guy from the baseball team, so that was pretty rough. I'm trying to focus on my friends and catching up with school, but just thinking about my ex-girlfriend makes me feel blue! What should I do to help keep my mind off from my ex-girlfriend and focus on class?



*Ricky's Health Challenge:* Hey, how are you? I've just received some really serious news. So do you remember how I told you about all of my doctor appointments? Well, at the end of last month, the doctors finally determined the cause of my poor health. I somehow contracted HIV and I'm now going to have to start looking at different treatment options. It's such a scary thing to have, especially at such a young age. The doctors told me I could have gotten it from anywhere where fluids were exchanged during intercourse. I'm really scared about my future, about missing school and having to tell my friends. I could really use some comforting words right now. How am I going to manage treatment and school at the same time?



*Ricky's Alert:* Your avatar has been diagnosed with **HIV** (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Ricky's Advocacy Challenge:* Hi there. Sorry, it's been awhile since we last talked. How have things been on your end? I started treatment and it has been going well. HIV isn't a curable disease, but treatment can prolong my life and make my quality of life better. So even though my physicality has improved and my understanding of my condition has gotten better, telling people is difficult. I have to explain to my teachers why I'm missing so much school and why I don't seem totally okay during class. It's a sensitive subject because of its sexual implications, and the lack of education about the topic. It's also embarrassing and uncomfortable to talk about as well. How should I confront the people around me about my condition?



*Ricky's Final Response:* What's up?! Ricky again. How have you been? I'm so sorry it's been so long. Your advice meant so much to me, thank you so much for all of your support. So I started to slowly tell my close friends about my condition, and most of them have taken the time to understand. A few have had poor initial reactions, but most of those friends have eventually come around. I've come to accept that I will be living with HIV for the rest of my life. I'm trying to put a positive twist on this whole situation by using it to educate my friends and family on the seriousness of the illness. It's definitely an uphill battle, but it's one that I will have to climb. Your support has meant wonders to me! I hope the rest of your year is great!

**Emily Sanchez**

*Emily's Biography:* I'm Emily. I don't really know what to say for myself other than my love for Ben and Jerry's ice cream. Sometimes I like to draw but I don't think I'm very good. I want to ask my mom if I can join an art class.

*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 15      *Birthday:* October 4



*Emily's Stress:* Hey, it's Emily. How are things with you? Things with me are weird like always... I always have so many questions and I never have anybody around to answer them. Well, I have my parents, but I feel like everything they tell me is a lie. Lately, everyone has been talking about sex... and I don't know too much about it because I never took sex education, and I don't know who to ask because it's such an embarrassing topic. Whenever I am around my friends, I always feel uncomfortable because I don't know what to say about sex, because I don't know much. How can I learn more about sex education, or get involved?



*Emily's Health Challenge:* Hey, it's Emily again and I've been really concerned because I've been thinking about this whole sex thing and how it affects me. Like what if when the day comes when I want to get intimate with someone and I don't know what can happen or how to protect myself or ...I don't know. I never feel comfortable asking people these questions and I'm always scared of what people's reactions to my lack of knowledge might be. It seems like I'm the only one who doesn't know this information, but I should know it. How can I better inform myself? I want to be prepared, should I ever need to know how to go about certain situations.



*Emily's Alert:* Your avatar has no idea how to protect herself sexually and is having trouble **self-advocating for protection**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Emily's Advocacy Challenge:* Hello, it's Emily once again. Thanks for the advice by the way. I did some research about what I didn't know online but it didn't get me very far because all the results were divided mostly by opinion and I never really trusted anything I read on the Internet. I really don't know where to go from here. It seems like all of the information is all different, I really want to be accurate on all of it so I don't look like a fool. I was thinking of asking my mom, but it is such an embarrassing subject. How do I bring it up without my mom thinking wrong of me?



*Emily's Final Response:* Hey it's Emily again. I decided to get the guts to try and talk to my counselor and see if she's willing to help me out. She told me I could visit a clinic or take a health class. I signed up for a health class for next semester and can't wait to learn more about how to stay safe sexually. Anyways, thank you for everything. You've been great to talk to and sorry for my constant ranting.

## Sheldon Phillips

*Sheldon's Biography:* Hey guys! My name is Sheldon Phillips. I am the captain of my high school's chess team and hope to get a full ride scholarship from Florida State University. I love listening to indie and alternative music. My friends and I love to go thrift shopping.

*Gender:* Male

*Age:* 18

*Birthday:* September 28



*Sheldon's Stress:* Hey it's Sheldon. How are you? I've been fine. I've been moving around a lot and always meet new people in the area. Learning new faces always has its ups and downs, but at least I have my friends that I meet up with from time to time. Sometimes I like meeting the new people and sometimes I wish I could just settle. It's just something that is out of my hands. What would you suggest I do to not feel so bummed about moving all the time?



*Sheldon's Health Challenge:* Hello it's Sheldon again. I really like my new home. I feel like I'm used to it. I even found a nice guy named Drew and we have been dating for a small amount of time. It's kind of weird because I've been getting a weird vibe... I have a bad feeling that he knows something I don't. I'm not sure if he's completely healthy. I've heard some stories about who he has been with before me. I found out one guy even had Chlamydia. I feel the need to ask but I don't want to offend him. How should I confront him in a way so that he won't get offended?



*Sheldon's Alert:* Your avatar is worried that he might have chlamydia, a **sexually transmitted infection** (STI). Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Sheldon's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey it's Sheldon, and things are not so good. I went to the free clinic and got everything checked and the doctor just recently called me letting me know that I have Chlamydia. I am outraged at Drew, but I also blame myself for not having protected ourselves. I am at a low point currently because my doctor informed me that if I don't act soon it could affect my health terribly. I need money for the antibiotics, but I have no idea where I can get them. I have never been more scared in my life. I guess I learned my lesson. I'm super bummed and upset that I let this happen, especially since I think Drew is a nice guy. Everything seems messy right now. How can I convince Drew that safe sex is important?



*Sheldon's Final Response:* Hey it's Sheldon one last time, and things for me are brightening up. I talked to Drew and we are both taking antibiotics. I just hope I am catching this in time because I am still terrified that it's going to affect me further than it already has. I really am keeping my hopes up high and thinking positively. Anyways, I wanted to thank you for everything. You are a great person to talk to.

## Maja Berk

*Maja's Biography:* Hey, I'm Maja! I'm a foreign exchange student from Serbia. I fluently speak six different languages and I love reading books. I really want to come back to the United States after I graduate. I love it here!

*Gender:* Female

*Age:* 16

*Birthday:* September 14



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*Maja's Stress:* Hey, it's Maja! How are you? I'm good, but my host mom is starting to get on my nerves. Her name is Ella and she loves to make my life miserable. She seems to think that when I came to this country, I was looking for a replacement family. She smothers me and makes me feel like I'm one of her kids. Not that I don't appreciate everything she's done for me this year, but she needs to realize I'm not her child. I ask to go out with my friends and she complains that I don't spend enough time at home. I stay at the house and she complains that all I do is sit around and do nothing. I can't win with this woman! She makes passive-aggressive statements all the time just to get under my skin and doesn't let me communicate with my family as much as I would like. I don't really know what to do because this woman has opened up her home to me and has been so kind, but she needs to give me my space. How can I make her understand that I am not her child and that I need her out of my bubble?



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*Maja's Health Challenge:* Hi, it's Maja again. It seems like it's been forever. A lot has happened since I talked to you. So Ella is still being a witch, but has let me talk more with my real family. I talked to my parents recently about getting the HPV Vaccine, but they told me that I needed to wait until I was 16 to get it. Of course, my birthday is during the school year, so I turned 16 in America. Ella has all of my medical paperwork and my parents have signed the required papers. Everything should be in order for me to get this vaccine, but Ella doesn't think it's a good idea. First of all, she doesn't get to decide what I can and can't do. She's not my mom. But she is the only person in this whole country who can help me and she's refusing. I really want to get this for my own personal health and she can't stand in my way... well she can, and she is. My parents only have a certain amount of authority thousands of miles away so I just don't know what to do. How can I convince Ella to let me get vaccinated? I don't want to get sick!



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*Maja's Alert:* Your avatar needs help advocating for her health by getting the **HPV Vaccination** (human papillomavirus infection). Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



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*Maja's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey, it's Maja again! Thanks for the advice you gave me, it helped a lot! Ella and I are still butting heads though. One day, I asked her if I could go to a movie with some friends and she gave me a really suspicious look. After half a minute of awkward eye-contact, she finally asked, "will there be boys?" That's one of her passive-aggressive ways of asking if I'll be having sex. I'm so tired of all the passive-aggressive, underhanded remarks she makes. I never know if I should answer her actual question, or the underlying one she's really asking. I told her I didn't know and that there was going to be a big group of us. She's been like this ever since we argued about my HPV vaccine, which I finally got. Like I'm going to just go and have sex with whoever shows a little interest. How should I tell her to stop being so rude and respect me and what I do?



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*Maja's Final Response:* Hi again! Well, it's my last week in America. I'm actually pretty sad to leave my school and my friends here. I'll even miss Ella a little. She's softened up a bit since I finally convinced her to let me get the HPV vaccine and give me some space. She has stopped making me feel guilty about everything I do and she's even cut back on the passive-aggressive comments. Thank you again for all your help!

## Jude Turner

*Jude's Biography:* Hello! I am Jude. I love superheroes. My favorites are Batman and Wonder Woman. Sometimes I think of myself as Wonder Woman. I recently joined the lacrosse team.

*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 15      *Birthday:* May 18



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*Jude's Stress:* Hey hey, it's Jude! What's up? How are you? I've been doing alright. Except for working on my Comic-Con costume. I can't decide between Zelda or Pikachu. Comic-Con is in five days and I haven't even started on creating my costume. Plus all the lacrosse games coming up, it's getting hard to handle all the pressure and it's really stressing me out. And to top it off, I'm having trouble keeping up with homework. What can I do to get my costume ready on time, and still have time for homework and lacrosse practice?



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*Jude's Health Challenge:* Hey it's me again. Comic-Con was last week and it was awesome! I went as Pikachu. My boyfriend Jake came with me. He went as Ash. It was really fun, and afterwards we stayed at my aunt's house in Denver. Later in the night when we were alone, Jake asked me to do things with him. You can probably guess what it was... I told him I was too tired, which was a lie. I wasn't comfortable with what he asked. I tried talking to some of my friends on the lacrosse team about what I should do. They sure didn't help. Jenny, the team captain, told me guys only want a girl that is willing to do things like that. I don't know if that could be true. Jake is coming over on Friday and I have a feeling that he will ask me again. How do I tell him no without him thinking I'm being weird or something?



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*Jude's Alert:* Your Avatar is struggling with **sexual pressure** from her boyfriend. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



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*Jude's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey, it's me Jude. Jake came over the other day. I used your advice and it seemed to help. I told him I didn't want to go there and he respected my decision. Now the girls on the lacrosse team are asking me about it. They think I told Jake that I wanted to go a step further with him. Ugh, I wish they would keep their noses out of my business. But I am worried about Jake. How do I tell everyone on my team to stop gossiping about me without causing any trouble?



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*Jude's Final Response:* Hey, so I talked to Jake. He understands and respects my feelings. I'm just glad I don't have to worry about dodging the ball at the moment. Things are still kind of awkward with the lacrosse girls when they ask about Jake. I don't mind as much anymore though. But I want to thank you for all the advice you gave me. It helped a lot! I'm not afraid to stand up for how I feel anymore.

## Alexandria Ambrosia

*Alexandria's Biography:* I'm Alexandria, or Alex for short. I am a first-degree black belt in Taekwondo and hope to open my own school someday. My family is Greek, so I also like to participate in Greek cultural events.

*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 16      *Birthday:* May 3



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*Alexandria's Stress:* Hi! I'm Alex, how are you? I'm doing great! I have an upcoming competition for my martial arts class in about a week and I'm confident that I will win the trophy. I still need to practice, just in case. People at school always make fun of me. I absolutely hate it. At least I'll have my girlfriend, Liz, to cheer me on. She's always there to support me in every competition, whether I win or lose. Hopefully my friends will be able to come as well. I just hope no one goes just to make fun of me. How can I keep my mind off and ignore all these mean people?



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*Alexandria's Health Challenge:* Hello again. How have you been? I've been feeling a little out of place lately. One day at lunch, my friends were talking about how far they have each gone with their girlfriends. I stayed quiet because Liz and I have had a great relationship so far without having intercourse. She really respects me, and I respect and care about her. But now I feel left out since I'm the only virgin among my friends. What can I do to not let what my friends talk about interfere with my relationship?



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*Alexandria's Alert:* Your avatar has been dealing with peer pressure from her friends, which is a **social aspect of sexual health**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



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*Alexandria's Advocacy Challenge:* Hi, it's me again. My friends have been making fun of me now. They keep saying I'm such a scaredy cat. It's starting to really hurt that my own friends would call me that and now I've started to avoid them. But they still talk about me behind my back. Liz has started to also feel awkward, but sticks to my side. I just hope she doesn't pressure me to do something that I don't want to do to her. How should I tell my friends to leave me and Liz alone? It's none of their business.



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*Alexandria's Final Response:* So I decided to try to work things out when Liz and I met after school one day at a cafe to hang out for a while. We confronted my friends about how wrong they were to judge us for not having intercourse. Now my friends have apologized for being so mean to me and said they will try to maintain healthier relationships. I'm so proud of them for becoming better friends to me. Now Liz and I don't have to worry about rumors. I'm so glad everything worked out. Oh, and I know I forgot to mention my competition, but...I won!! Once again, I brought home another trophy. I'll see you later! Bye bye.

## Angela Kim

*Angela's Biography:* Hi, my name is Angela, and I love to dance – especially ballet. I'm really close to my mom, and one thing we like to do together is yoga. One thing I've always wanted to do is learn to surf in Hawaii.

*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 18      *Birthday:* November 11



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*Angela's Stress:* Hi, my name is Angela. What's up? I'm just in my room, doing make up work for school since I was in the hospital. I was dancing at ballet club after school when I slipped and fell hard, breaking my left leg. I had to miss a week of school so I could walk again, and now I have a lot of homework. Tomorrow, I'll be able to go back to school and be able to see my boyfriend, Jerry. He's been so worried and came to visit me at the hospital and at home ever since I fell. I'm really sad about missing so much ballet. What if this darn leg won't allow me to dance for a long time? What's worse, these painkillers taste terrible. And as if all of this wasn't bad enough, my monthly pains are due soon. I take birth control pills so that I am not in pain all week, but I don't think I can take two different kinds of pills at the same time. What should I do about my pills? I want my leg to heal, but I don't want to deal with more pain.



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*Angela's Health Challenge:* Hello, it's me again. How have you been? I've been much better, the cast around my leg is now covered in signatures from all my friends and they have all been walking me from class to class to make sure I don't get pushed around in the halls. Jerry is usually with me too. I love all the attention, but it's hard to find a time for me to take my birth control pills without people thinking that Jerry and I are sexually active. I don't want people to get into our business or spread rumors about us. But I really need my pills. How do I explain to my friends what my pills are really for?



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*Angela's Alert:* Your avatar is struggling with how to confront her friends about her birth control pills and what they are used for, which has lead her to deal with an **emotional aspect of sexual health**. Be prepared to research this particular subject.



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*Angela's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey, it's Angela again. So I have good and bad news! Good news is that my leg is now free and I'm no longer wearing my cast. My friends have now stopped babysitting me all the time and now I can walk and be with Jerry every now and then. The bad news is that my friends have been very judgmental. A couple of days ago, I went to the locker room after ballet and I took my birth control pills and accidentally left them in my locker. So the next day, I went back to my locker and noticed as I walked by, my friends got quiet. They kind of stared at me as I got my pills out of my locker and went to class. I wondered if they were talking about the pills. And since then, I've heard rumors about my birth control pills and people started to call me names. I've stopped talking to most of my friends and have stuck with Jerry to keep me company. He knows the rumors aren't true and says they'll die down soon. I just hope he's right, I miss being with my friends. How can I tell them to respect my decision to take birth control pills?



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*Angela's Final Response:* Hey there, it's Angela. So the rumors have died down, but now I feel so insecure. People think I'm a slut, when my pills are just to control my monthly pains. Jerry has been very nice to me since he knows how all these rumors have affected me. I feel like a crumpled piece of paper; even if I've been smoothed out, the wrinkles are still there, and they hurt. But anyways, thank you for giving me advice on what to do. Bye bye.

# **Social & Emotional Health**

**Brett Grey**

*Brett's Biography:* Hi there, my name is Brett. I live and breathe soccer. I also work as a lifeguard during the summer and enjoy swimming, but soccer is my life. My dream is to attend the University of Indiana next year.  
*Gender:* Male      *Age:* 18      *Birthday:* August 9



*Brett's Stress:* Hey, what's up? How have you been lately? I've been doing sort of ok. I stopped lifeguarding for the season so I can focus on my schoolwork and soccer. My dad is coaching the soccer team this year and I really want to do well and become captain so I can make him proud and make myself proud, but I've been feeling kinda out of it lately. I haven't been sleeping well, and on average, I get about three hours of sleep a night. I have experienced this before, but it usually comes in phases that last a few weeks. I hope I snap out of it soon because I need to have energy to play soccer. Maybe it's not that big of a deal, it's just taking a lot out of me. What should I do to get more rest? I'm really looking forward to this soccer season, but I would like some advice and help so that I don't feel so drained. I'll talk to you later.



*Brett's Health Challenge:* What's up, it's Brett again. I remember last time we talked, I told you that I hadn't been sleeping well at night, and it's been getting worse and worse. Maybe I'm just sinking to a new low. It's been really taking a toll on my health. I haven't been doing well in school or soccer. My dad and I have been arguing a lot lately about my missing assignments, and how I should be focusing more on my schoolwork. I'm just so tired and all I want to do is spend time in my room alone. I try to sleep, but I just lay there and my mind goes crazy with thoughts. I've been visiting the doctor a lot more lately to try and get help. I've been mixing up my medication and trying new things to try and regulate my mood swings. I just want to be normal again. I hate not being active, it's just impossible to play soccer and be good. Anytime I try to kick the ball around to my teammates, I screw up and get even more irritated with myself. I don't know what to do. I can't help it. What should I do to try and regulate my mood? How can I stop all the fighting with my dad?



*Brett's Alert:* Your avatar was diagnosed with **bipolar disorder**, which is a lifelong condition. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Brett's Advocacy Challenge:* Hi again. Thanks for the advice you gave me, it's been helping me these last few days, but ughhh, I can't snap out of this bad mood. I try to be excited about things but it feels like it's impossible. I've been getting really mad at little things that I normally wouldn't. Like yesterday, I decided to practice aiming for the goal by kicking a soccer ball around my backyard, but I kept missing. I never miss the goal! I got so mad that I kicked the ball as hard as I could, and it went through my garage window. My dad got really mad at me. I just feel like no one knows how I feel. I feel so alone. I have another doctor's appointment in two days, and I've been taking my medication, but it doesn't help. I really don't know what to do. I'm always so tired and frustrated. I just want to be happy...even if it's for a second. How can I get my doctor to understand how I feel and give me the right medication?



*Brett's Final Response:* Hey, how have you been? I've finally been able to sleep more again, which is such a relief! My doctor gave me some new medication, which has seemed to help with my mood changes. I play soccer after school every day, and my dad and I have been keeping a good relationship. I have been laughing, smiling and having fun. I'm finally back in my body, but I'm worried because I don't know how long it will last. I'm trying to steer away from that idea and enjoy this mood while it lasts. I still have the goal to be the captain of our soccer team, but I won't be too bummed out if I don't get it. Other kids deserve it too. As with school, I've been doing a lot better. My grades are looking so much better, and I want to thank you for all you have done. I don't think I could have gotten out of that phase without you. It was good to have someone who was supportive, and I felt like you knew what I was going through. Thank you! I hope you're school year goes well, and I wish you the best of luck.

**Sloan Chadwick**

*Sloan's Biography:* Hi! My name is Sloan and I really love to learn, especially about science! In the future I hope to change the world through organic chemistry. Something else cool about me is that I once went swimming with dolphins.

*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 18      *Birthday:* December 8



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*Sloan's Stress:* Hey, it's Sloan! How have you been? I'm alright I guess. I'm still a little worked up about my science teacher, Mrs. Watson. She is a complete slob. Papers are left strewn across her desk, coffee cups go unattended for weeks and she constantly has bad breathe. I can't stand it!! That woman is a disaster waiting to happen. What if she loses one of my important papers on her desk? What if she touches that paper after she finds it with her disgusting hands? Oh God, what if after she touches that paper, and then I touch it and contract whatever disease is lying dormant on her skin? Ahhhhh, I need to stop thinking about her, she's not even here and she's stressing me out. What should I do to help me not think of her and how gross she is?



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*Sloan's Health Challenge:* Hey, it's Sloan again! It's been awhile since we last talked. So remember that teacher I told you about? Well last week, we were doing an experiment and she knocked over my graduated cylinder. Luckily it was just water, but it spilled all over my lab sheet and smeared the ink on the paper. To top that off, she went to get paper towels and accidentally knocked over the basket full of our homework. Papers were everywhere and she didn't seem to care. There was such a mess around, I couldn't take it and had to leave the room. I literally had a headache and a sense of rage when this all happened! She's such a klutz and so disorganized, but I have to take her class for the rest of the semester at least. What should I do so that she stops giving me headaches? What can I do to at least save my papers from getting ruined or lost? Or infected with her germs?



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*Sloan's Alert:* Your avatar has **obsessive compulsive disorder**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



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*Sloan's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey again, it's been awhile since I've talked to you. Thanks so much for your help! So you remember Mrs. Watson right? Well, I was in her class the other day and she was handing back papers. First of all, she wasn't doing it in alphabetical order and that bothered me. Second is that right before she called my name, she sneezed. And I'm not talking about a little, allergy-related sneeze. This was a full-blown, snot-hanging-from-your-nose sneeze! Worst of all, she sneezed onto her hand right before she grabbed my paper! I watched in abject horror as the paper landed on my desk. I wasn't about to touch that thing, not for all the money in the world. I decided to focus on something else so I didn't have to see that snot-stained assignment. I looked around the room and all I saw was clutter and disorganization. Mouse droppings on the counters, chemicals left out, and cockroach cages tipped over. I tried my hardest to find the cleanest spot in the room. I realized, however, that I had coped with the class before this incident by doing just that. The cleanest part of this room was my own desk. That is, before it was covered by snot-paper. Nowhere was safe! I had to get out. So that's what I did. It was so embarrassing to walk out of the class again, but I seriously couldn't handle it anymore! I hate that I can't just let these things go, but I just don't know how to cope with my OCD. I need to find a solution fast, before I say something or do something that could get me in trouble. How can I explain to my parents about my OCD so that I can get help?



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*Sloan's Final Response:* Hey! It's been a really long time since I've talked to you. I've been doing much better in my science class. Mrs. Watson is still a slob, but I've found ways to get over her sloppiness. I would never have been able to do that without you! Looking back, I could have handled everything better than I did, but it was a learning experience and I definitely gained a lot from it.

## Marco Aguilar

*Marco's Biography:* Hey, I'm Marco. I really like participating in my swim team and hanging out with friends. One day, I hope to go to culinary school and eventually open my own restaurant. I am the salutatorian of my senior class.

*Gender:* Male      *Age:* 17      *Birthday:* June 6



*Marco's Stress:* Hi there, it's Marco, what have you been doing lately? I've just been studying and swimming. I have several tests coming up and I'm really worried about passing. I have been studying non-stop, but not much has been sticking in my head. I am starting to panic! And to top it off, swimming consumes all of my time, which I normally don't mind because it helps me to relax for a while. But I really shouldn't be swimming with all this studying I have to do! Sometimes it gets stressful because each test and percentage point counts towards keeping up my class ranking. The regional swim team meet is also quickly approaching. Ahhhhh, I'm getting so nervous about all that is going on, that my hands are starting to shake. I hope it keeps me striving to do better though. I just hope I can pull through in both swimming and school! What do you think, how can I better manage my time so that I don't feel nervous?



*Marco's Health Challenge:* Hey, it's been so long! What's new in your life? Our team did excellent at the swim meet! Now we are going to state! However, now midterms are just around the corner and I feel like I'm not going to do very well. I'm so scared of failing! I've been burning the candle at both ends lately, and I feel like both my schoolwork and my athletics are suffering because of one another. My classes are very difficult, and I am barely getting an A. Sitting on the edge of a grade fills me with such restlessness, to the point that I find it difficult to concentrate whilst studying. My family says that I'm putting too much pressure on myself but I just feel like I need to keep pushing forward to maintain my GPA. I just feel so nervous right now. Do you think this is normal, for me to feel so worried and nervous? I could use your advice!



*Marco's Alert:* Your avatar is suffering from **anxiety**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Marco's Advocacy Challenge:* Hello again, it's been too long. I apologize for not writing to you sooner. Thank you for your advice, it was very comforting. So my midterms came and went, and I didn't do very well at all. It was horrible! My GPA dropped, and it made me feel so awful. I had gotten sick from all this stress and was lacking so much sleep. My parents had taken me to the doctor, and the doctor told me I have anxiety. Just great. Now I feel more overwhelmed than ever! On the bright side, our team did well at state! That's really the only silver lining right now. Anyways, I would like some advice on what to do to and try to deal with my anxiety. How should I try and raise my grades while making sure my anxiety is under control?



*Marco's Final Response:* Hey! Thank you so much for your advice! I've been feeling a lot better lately. I finally took a step back to reevaluate my priorities. I went to talk to my doctor again, and he gave me some really helpful tips for dealing with my anxiety. I kind of had to put my schoolwork on the back burner. I haven't spent as much time with my swim team, which has strained our friendships a little bit but I've realized that I don't need to stress myself out to get good grades. My anxiety still gets bad sometimes when I feel like I have too many commitments, but now it's easier to control how I feel because I know how to take control of my health. Thank you again for your help through this difficult time. I wish you all the best!

**Amelia Everhart**

*Amelia's Biography:* Hi, I'm Amelia and I like horror movies. They scare me, but for some reason, I can't resist them! I live at home with my mom who works two jobs. I really want to make a name for myself in the film industry so I can help my mom the same way she's helped me all these years.

*Gender:* Female      *Age:* 17      *Birthday:* March 25



*Amelia's Stress:* Hey what's up? How are things going? I'm actually messaging you right now because earlier today, I made my mom pretty upset. I spent most my first paycheck on Stephen King movies. I know we've been low on money, but I just couldn't help myself! Seeing my mom upset is really stressing me out. She says I should save up my money, but we rarely buy things that we want. I'm not sure what to do. Should I return my movies and save up my money? How can I better manage my money in the future?



*Amelia's Health Challenge:* Hey! Soooo, I returned the movies and decided to save my money. This put my mom at ease. Our constant state of economic instability is making me feel powerless. I've been trying to keep my mind off things by working out a lot more and dieting. But my friends told me that they are worried. The other day, my friend Ven told me I should get help for my weight. He threw words around like "eating disorder" and "anorexic." I don't think I have a problem; I'm just trying to get in shape! I weighed myself at 90 pounds last week, which means my exercising and dieting is paying off. But what if what my friends are telling me is true? Should I go to the doctor and ask if I really am healthy?



*Amelia's Alert:* Your avatar is struggling with anorexia, a type of **eating disorder**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Amelia's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey, thanks for the help. I went to my doctor, and he told me that I have anorexia. He also talked to my mother about consulting a nutritionist, who could help me out. In the meantime, I should try to eat a little more and exercise less to reach a healthy weight again. But how will I eat more if my mom and I can't afford to buy more food? How do I get the nutritionist to understand that our economic state might be a challenge for me and my mom and that I need help to figure out a healthy diet? I need your help. I want to be healthy again!



*Amelia's Final Response:* Hey again! I actually have good news this time. I went to see a nutritionist. He talked to me and told me that anorexia is a treatable disorder. He gave me a few tips on how to gain weight while being healthy. At the same time, he helped me think of foods to eat that won't cost a whole lot of extra money! My mom is happy that I am on the road to recovery. Anyways, thank you so much for all the help you've given me. This won't be an easy battle. But I'm ready to face it.

## Bobby Bradshaw

*Bobby's Biography:* Hey, I'm Bobby. I like to cook, and I want to travel the world for the food. I live with my mom, my grandma and Pickles, my cat.

*Gender:* Male

*Age:* 16

*Birthday:* July 23



*Bobby's Stress:* Hello, my name is Bobby. How are you? Ehh, I'm not doing so well. I can't concentrate in class, ever since my big brother, Adam, hung himself in our basement and died...I loved him so much and now it pains me to not have him with me anymore. Why did he do it? What made him take his own life away? These are the questions that keep running through my mind and won't leave me alone...I'm not sure how to find at least a little bit of happiness, or even a way to cope. What do you think I should do?



*Bobby's Health Challenge:* Hey, it's Bobby. So I haven't been able to stop thinking about my brother...I miss him so much, I wish I could be with him...What if I go with him? My mother and Grandma have been constantly fighting over how to keep our bakery open. Adam and I used to help make all kinds of pastries together and we would be able to make enough to keep all the shelves stocked with goodies. We were making enough money to keep us running the shop, pay the bills, and still have a bit of money to save up for other things. Now that my brother is gone, it's hard to make enough bread for the customers. I remember he used to tell me that I'll become a great chef someday, but now it's hard to even picture that for my future. Lately, I've started to cut myself and it feels sort of relaxing. In a way, it makes me feel like I'm connecting with my brother, since he also used to cut himself. But my friends keep telling me to not do it. Am I doing the right thing by cutting? What's so wrong about it?



*Bobby's Alert:* Your avatar is coping with the death of his brother by cutting, a form of **self-harm**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Bobby's Advocacy Challenge:* Hello again, it's Bobby. I can't take the pain anymore and can't stand all the arguing between my mom and grandma anymore. I've continued to cut my wrists and just letting all the blood flow out when I take a shower, so that my family doesn't see or have to worry about anything else. I've started to wear arm warmers to hide my scars. The only other comfort I've been able to find is by talking to my cat Pickles and my best friend Kevin. When I'm not working in our bakery, I'm hanging out with Kevin. He's been really worried about me and says I should see a counselor, or talk to a therapist. But I'm afraid of being judged instead of helped. I want to be happy again, but I don't know what to do? What would you suggest I try differently?



*Bobby's Final Response:* Hey there, how have you been? I've been better. My friend best friend, Kevin, noticed that I have been cutting and got really worried. He told me to talk to a counselor and look for help, but I was too shy to go alone. So Kevin went with me to seek help at these family group therapies that are held at the hospital near my house. I've been going with my mom and she's been talking to me more, and we've even started to do more things together. We've started to walk at the park by our home and really getting to understand each other more. I've started to cut less, and I'm not in my room all the time anymore. Getting out and about has really helped me deal with all the stress, along with the therapy. And Pickles, who almost seems to sense when I need him the most. I still miss Adam, but I know I have to move on and hopefully become a chef. He would be very proud of me. Thanks for also helping me out with all the information you gave me on how to deal with losing a loved one.

## Garth Parsons

*Garth's Biography:* What's up, I'm Garth. I am in the band department at my art school, and I really like learning how to play new instruments. I have a job at the rec center around the corner from my house. I really want to go to a good college outside of state. I am the youngest of 6 kids.

*Gender:* Male      *Age:* 17      *Birthday:* May 29



*Garth's Stress:* Hey, it's Garth. How have you been? I have been getting really into my music, but my parents think I spend too much time on it and I need to spend more time on my education. But I hate school; it's so boring and uninteresting. They also tell me why I couldn't be more like my brothers and sisters, all academically gifted. But I'm just not like them. I feel like I don't belong or I'm not good enough for my family. They make me feel worthless. Am I really that bad of a child? How can I make them feel proud of me? Or make myself feel like I am someone?



*Garth's Health Challenge:* Hey, it's Garth again. My mom just told me that she wants to send me to an all-boy, private math school because I'm falling behind in school. I just can't seem to find the inspiration to keep pushing forward or even show up to school. I guess I'm just feeling a little down, I've even stopped going out with my friends. I haven't made more music for a while. I just don't see the point in anything anymore. Ugh, but I don't want to go to a different school. They probably have homework every night and papers due every week. What should I do to not go to that math school? How can I convince my mom to not move me?



*Garth's Alert:* Your avatar is struggling with **depression**. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Garth's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey, thanks for your advice you gave me, but it's too late to do any better now. My mom already enrolled me to the new school. It sucks. I miss my friends and I miss my old school. I just don't know how to deal with the stress any more. I feel really depressed and cry myself to sleep from feeling so helpless. I don't know who to talk to anymore. What should I do? How can I get my parents to listen to me and convince them to take me back to my other school?



*Garth's Final Response:* Hey it's Garth, thanks for all your support. My parents are finally listening to me, and decided that it was best that I stay at my old school. They are also trying to understand me better in order to help me raise my grades. The attention that they are now giving me is making me feel almost as important as the rest of my siblings. I'm also trying to stay motivated so I can have time for my music. Thank you again, it was nice getting to know you. Bye!

## Quinn Berry

*Quinn's Biography:* My name is Quinn Berry, and I am obsessed with Russian nesting dolls. I have hopes to become a psychologist. Even though they gross other people out, I also like to collect insects. Butterflies and exotic moths are my favorites.

*Gender:* Female

*Age:* 15

*Birthday:* August 4



*Quinn's Stress:* Why, Hello there. It is Quinn. How are you? I, myself, am doing okay. Except for one thing: it's my bug-collecting club. My group was assigned to collect a rare Emperor Butterfly. My three partners have already collected theirs. No matter where I look, I can't find one! Our next meeting is in three days. If I don't have my butterfly, I will be kicked out of my group. I'm so nervous. This bug-collecting club is my life. How can I relax myself enough to be able to concentrate on catching the butterfly?



*Quinn's Health Challenge:* It's Quinn and I didn't ever find the butterfly. My group kicked me out. And now no other groups want me because everyone knows I can't find an Emperor Butterfly. I'm heartbroken. Those guys were my only friends. I don't have anyone one to hang out with at school or even afterwards. Well, except my great grandma named Aleu. She tells me to not listen to all these punks, but they are hard to ignore. That's not even the worst part, since some of the older kids at school found out about my Russian nesting dolls. The kids from the bug club probably told them. Now everybody is making fun of me just because of my russian dolls. It's been miserable for me. I sometimes question why I am still here. I don't even know what to do. What can I do to feel like I belong again?



*Quinn's Alert:* Your avatar is having **suicidal** thoughts and doesn't know how to cope with them. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Quinn's Advocacy Challenge:* Nothing has gotten better. My great grandma, Aleu, has been trying to help me lift my spirits by spending lots of time with me. I talk to her a lot, and she tells me that I should find new friends. That would be nice, but I'm starting to think I need more help than that. But I'm afraid of scaring her if I tell her I've been feeling suicidal. I tried talking to my dad about it, but he is so busy with his new job, I don't think he has time for me. I think about ending my life more and more often. No one would even care. I would simply be forgotten. But I want someone to listen to me and help me not feel so depressed. What do you think I should do?



*Quinn's Final Response:* Hey it's me. I just wanted to let you know things have gotten better. Your advice really did help. Because I wasn't sure who to go to, I ended up calling the Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The person I got to talk to was very caring and listened to how I was feeling, and recommended that I find things to do that I really enjoyed. So I began looking for a new activity, and I found a new club: The National Russian Nesting Doll Collectors Society. It's so much fun! No one there judges you if you don't have a certain doll. It's great! My great grandma Aleu was right about finding new friends. I've still been having trouble talking with my dad, but I think he'll come around. Anyway, thanks for everything. You've helped me more than you know.

## Lenny Baldwin

*Lenny's Biography:* Hey, my name is Lenny and I really like to draw and paint. Someday, I would like to become an accomplished artist! I have a younger sister and a dog named Maximus.

*Gender:* Male      *Age:* 16      *Birthday:* June 3



*Lenny's Stress:* Hey it's Lenny. How's it going? I'm good just wish I had more free time. I always have so much homework to do, that I barely ever get to go outside. Actually, I have even started to gain weight from lack of activity. Sometimes I feel taking all honors classes is too much and I wonder how my classmates handle it. It's so crazy, how I can have two major papers and a project all due on the same day. My teachers don't get it! I'm only human, not a workaholic robot! I wish my teachers would stop giving us homework. How can I manage all my work and stay on top of things?



*Lenny's Health Challenge:* Hello, Lenny again. I am still stressing over all my homework. It's gotten to the point where I think I am gaining weight from the stress. I come straight home and eat more than I usually do. But lately, I've started to make myself vomit after every meal. Although I know it's kinda gross, I think it's good that I can vomit whenever I want to lose any weight that I might be gaining. It's just that I don't have time to exercise! I also haven't been able to paint for a while, which makes me sad. I love painting and wish I had more time for it. And to make matters worse, my mom gets so angry with me for vomiting so much. She thinks I'm sick because I'm not eating right, but I'm not really sick. She just doesn't know that I'm vomiting to stay thin. I'm just trying to stay in shape and get rid of these jelly rolls on my stomach. I have also started getting headaches, but I think that's because my mom keeps telling me to eat right. She also said I've started to smell weird and stink! What should I do so that my mom stops yelling at me about the way I'm losing weight? She might make my headaches worse!



*Lenny's Alert:* Your avatar has bulimia, an **eating disorder** which includes symptoms of feeling overweight and causes the person to vomit after eating large portions of food. Be prepared to research this particular health challenge for an upcoming assignment.



*Lenny's Advocacy Challenge:* Hey it's Lenny. It's been awhile since we've talked. Things are still stressful. Since it's the middle of the school year, this is when homework gets really intense. I've noticed that so much vomiting is paying off, and I feel good about how I look. My mom hasn't yelled at me as much, but she has been making me eat healthier foods and making sure I don't vomit afterwards. She says I look really sick and scrawny, and she's not the only one. My friends say I look tired and slimmer, as if that were a bad thing. I just don't understand how losing weight is bad, although I still get some terrible headaches. They seem to be getting worse and worse. I hate having so much work always running through my head. It's been hard. How can I gain control of this problem? I want to be thin, but I don't want my mom and friends to worry about my health. And I don't want any more headaches!



*Lenny's Final Response:* Hey again. It's Lenny. I have let my stress get too far and I want to relax more. I talked to my teachers and they have lightened the homework load. My mom also took me to the doctor because she got really worried, and I found out that I had become bulimic. I was sent to therapy, where they told me about healthier ways to stay in shape and that I should try to eat more fruit and healthier foods. I followed the therapist's advice and slowly but surely, I have stopped vomiting and my mom has been really happy that I have better control of my eating habits. Even my headaches have started to go away! I have also been taking a lot more time to paint again. I missed being able to do something fun! Thank you for taking time to talk to me, it's been nice.