

It's Cool to Be Kind: Activity 2

Mind your tone

Children interpret the emotions behind text messages to practice thinking critically and avoiding misinterpretation and conflict in online exchanges.

Goals for children



- ✓ **Make** the right decisions when choosing how and what to communicate.
- ✓ **Identify** situations in which waiting until you are face-to-face with someone is a better way to communicate than sending a text or message that may be taken the wrong way.

Let's talk



It's easy to misunderstand

Young people use different types of communication for different kinds of interaction, but messages sent via chat and text can be interpreted differently than they would in person or over the phone.

Have you ever been misunderstood in text? For example, have you ever texted a joke and your friend thought you were being serious – or even mean?

Have you ever misunderstood someone else in a text or chat? What did you do to help clarify the communication? What could you do differently?

Activity



Materials needed:

- Sample text messages written or on one of your home devices

1. Review messages

Let's take a look at these sample text messages on the board. Your children probably have great examples too, so let's write some more to discuss.

- "That's so cool".
- "Whatever".
- "I'm so mad at you".
- "CALL ME NOW".
- "Kk fine".

2. Read messages out loud Now

For each message, you are going to ask your children to read it aloud in a specific tone of voice (e.g., 😞 😐 😊). What do you notice? How might these come across to other people? How might each "message sender" better communicate what they really mean?

Takeaway

It can be hard to understand how someone is really feeling when you're reading a text. Be sure you choose the right tool for your next communication – and that you don't read too much into things that people say to you online. If you are unsure what the other person meant, find out by talking with them in person or on the phone.

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