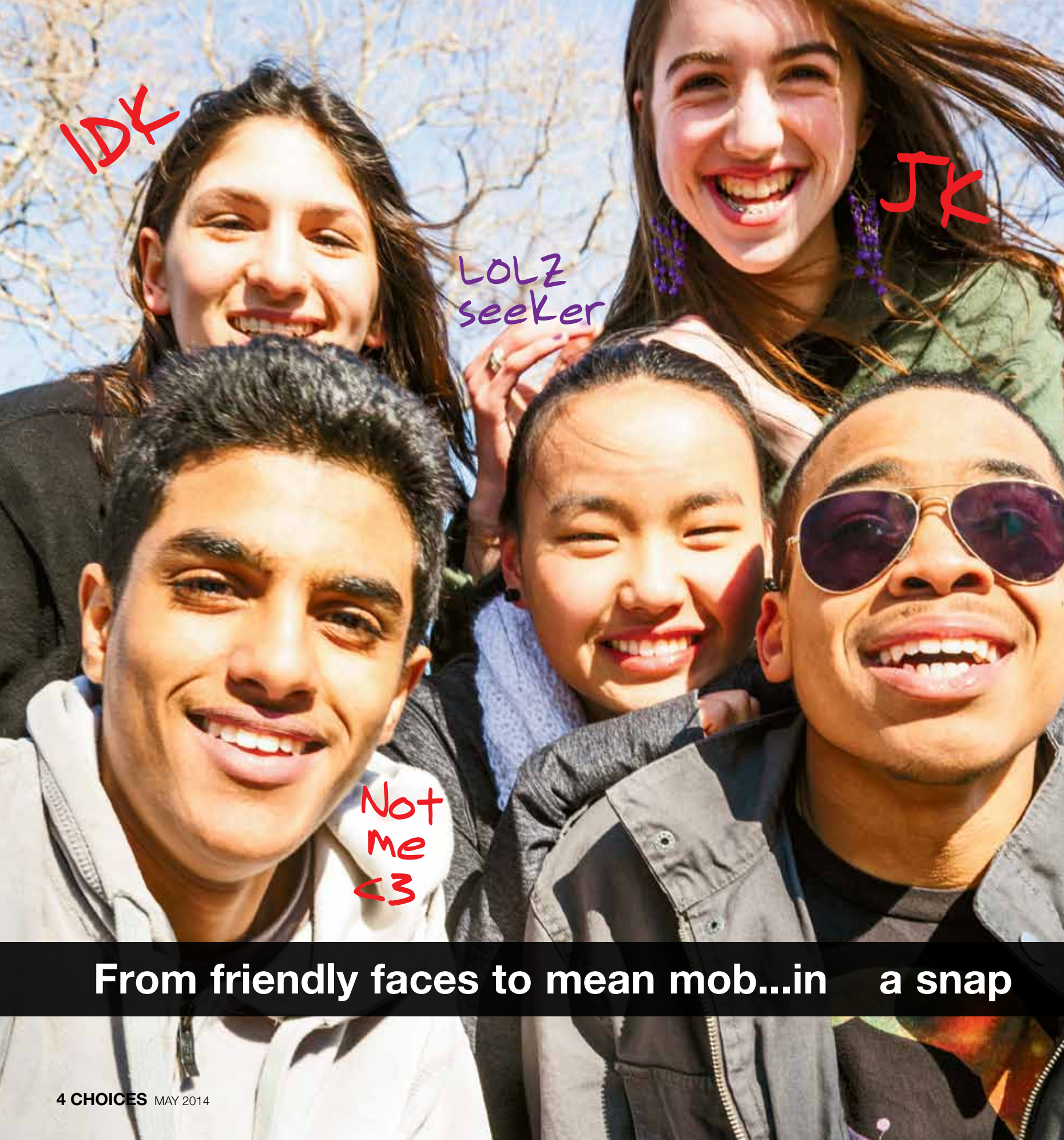


WHICH ONE OF THEM IS THE CYBERBULLY?

Nasty fake profiles, scathing sub-tweets, embarrassing snapchats—you know what digital drama is, but do you know how you can get sucked in? Read about four different types of online bullies—and make sure you don't become one of them.

BY KIM TRANELL



From friendly faces to mean mob...in a snap



1. THE MEAN MOB

It's Friday night, and you and your friends are having a sleepover at Ashley's. You're all bored, so you gather around a laptop, laughing hysterically as Ashley torments her crush's new girlfriend on Ask.fm.

YOU TELL YOURSELF: "I'm just watching and laughing."

THE PROBLEM: An audience is what gives this cyberbully fuel (she's doing it for the LOLs). So whether you chime in with your own insults or just laugh along with the group, you're encouraging Ashley to keep it up.

STAND UP: This bully is trying to entertain you, and if she doesn't get the encouragement she's seeking, she'll lose interest. If you don't feel comfortable saying "Stop it, Ashley, you're being a jerk," simply suggesting a better use of time may pull the group's attention away from bullying. ("Hey, who wants to take the 'Which Divergent Faction Are You?' quiz with me?")

PULLED INTO A CYBER-MOB SITUATION?

Even if you're afraid to stand up for the victim, don't give in to the pressure to share mean Tweets or post your own dig. Blame it on your parents. ("Oh, my mom watches everything I'm saying.")



2. THE "INNOCENT" AVENGER

Sarah posts a nasty status update about your GF, Jane, on Facebook that says, "Jane got the lead in the play? Barf." You're furious. Without thinking twice, you comment-bomb the status, bashing Sarah's acting skills and calling her stupid. You've righted a wrong!

YOU TELL YOURSELF: I'm standing up for my girlfriend.

THE PROBLEM: Sarah is posting because she's looking for a reaction. And the crazy thing is, if the original post didn't get everyone's attention, your **retaliation** will. Responding to drama just adds fuel to the fire.

STAND UP: Instead of mixing it up with the mean person, connect with the victim—message something supportive, like "Ignore the drama! You're awesome!" That comment will actually make a difference to the injured party. If you want to "avenge," say something *in person* to the perp, and nicely suggest an apology either online or IRL.



3. THE "OOPS! DID I DO THAT?" BULLY

You're on the bus on the way home from your soccer game, and everyone's joking about the giant zit on Kayla's forehead—even Kayla. Laughing, you take a photo of Kayla's face, then snapchat it to a few friends. (Caption: "This party is about to POP!") One of the guys you know takes a screenshot of the snap and posts it all over, leaving Kayla **devastated**.

YOU TELL YOURSELF: It was just a joke!

THE PROBLEM: Some harmless gags just don't translate online, and once you share something, you lose control over it—anything can happen.

STAND UP: If you cross the line, you can help put out the fire by admitting that you made a mistake. "Even if you didn't mean it, you have a responsibility to recognize that it's upsetting or disrupting someone's life," says Justin W. Patchin, co-director of the Cyberbullying Research Center.

KEEP THE PROOF

Sometimes telling an adult "I've been cyberbullied" doesn't compute. So take a screenshot of the evidence or print it out—and show them.

RANDOM ACTS OF ONLINE KINDNESS

How teens across the country are fighting bullies who hide behind their screens.

GREAT SPORTS IN CALIFORNIA

After missing a critical save in a big soccer game, Daniel Cui, who was a freshman soccer goalie at the time, became the target of a cruel cyberbullying campaign calling Daniel the "Worst Goalie Ever." So to rally behind him, his teammates found a shot of him blocking a goal and decided to each make it their FB profile picture. This simple stand didn't just quiet the bullies—it triggered an outpouring of support from other students, too.

TAKING A STAND IN IOWA

After cyberbullies used anonymous Twitter accounts to criticize local students, Jeremiah Anthony, now a senior, created a feed to compliment his fellow West High School classmates. They randomly picked students—sometimes even teachers—and tweeted out praise from @WestHighBros. The goal: Encourage kindness and change the school's climate from cruel to kind.

MAKING IT BETTER IN MAINE

A group of students at Edward Little High School saw Twitter bullying skyrocket after Facebook was cut off inside their school. Their solution? #NoBull. Every time they saw a mean comment online, they simply sent that message to the bully, letting them know that **harassment** would not be tolerated—and that they stood with the victim. It became an easy way to take a unified stand, even for those who wouldn't otherwise be comfortable confronting a bully.

Who's the tough guy now? Hahahahaaaa



4. THE POWER-HUNGRY HARASSER

You know what it's like to be bullied. In fact, you rarely make it through homeroom without someone calling you "loser." So when that jerk Jake and his friends pour milk all over your sandwich at lunch, it's the last straw. You go home that night and create a bogus Instagram account, anonymously uploading fake, humiliating pictures of Jake (thanks, Photoshop).

YOU TELL YOURSELF: It's payback time! Plus, if everyone's making fun of Jake, they'll forget about me.

THE PROBLEM: You're trying to frighten or embarrass your bully, which makes you feel powerful. But if you fight a bully online, *the bully* could go to the authorities and *you* (not him) will get in trouble.

STAND UP: Instead of retaliating, talk to an adult you trust, like a parent, coach, or counselor. It sounds lame, but telling is *not* tattling. This person can help you come up with a plan to solve the problem. (It'll make you feel stronger than stooping to the bully's level and becoming a bad guy yourself.)

WILL YOU PAY THE PRICE?

These scary consequences should make you think twice before you spew hate online.

BOOTED FROM SCHOOL

Anything you do or say online is subject to school discipline. In many cases, even "good kids" hiding behind computer screens are getting suspended, **tarnishing** their school records, or even being expelled.

ARRESTED

Laws differ from state to state, but you can be charged with everything from stalking (for bombing someone with hostile comments) and disseminating child pornography (for sharing a racy photo) to felony harassment (for making threats). And don't think you're safe if you're doing it "anonymously"—authorities can easily trace cyberbullying back to its source via something called an IP address.

SLAPPED WITH A LAWSUIT

Earlier this year in Texas, a teen's parents sued six students alleged to have humiliated their daughter by posting **vulgar** photos on Instagram. Cases like this one used to be rare, but now the risk is very real: Online bullying can cost you and your family loads of money.

