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Safety MAGAZINE

INSIDE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DURING
THE PANDEMIC

CREATING DEEP CONNECTIONS
IN CRISIS

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"UGLY"

"FAT"

"USELESS"

SOS

MESSAGE TO THE PARENTS



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DIGITAL - FALL 2021



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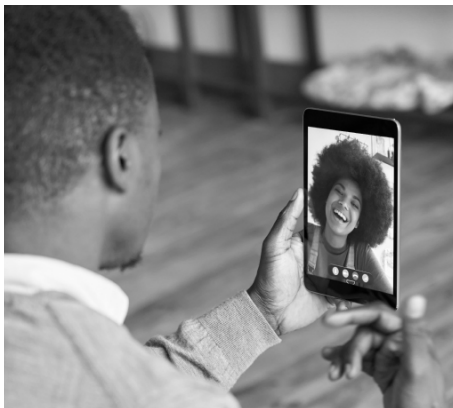
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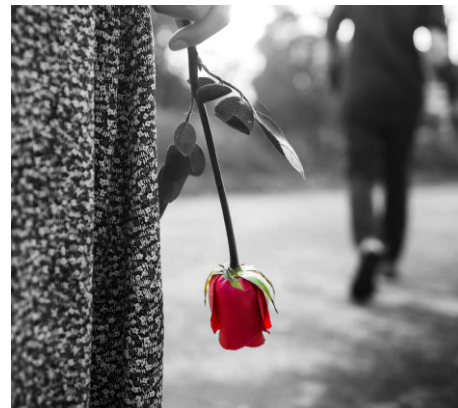
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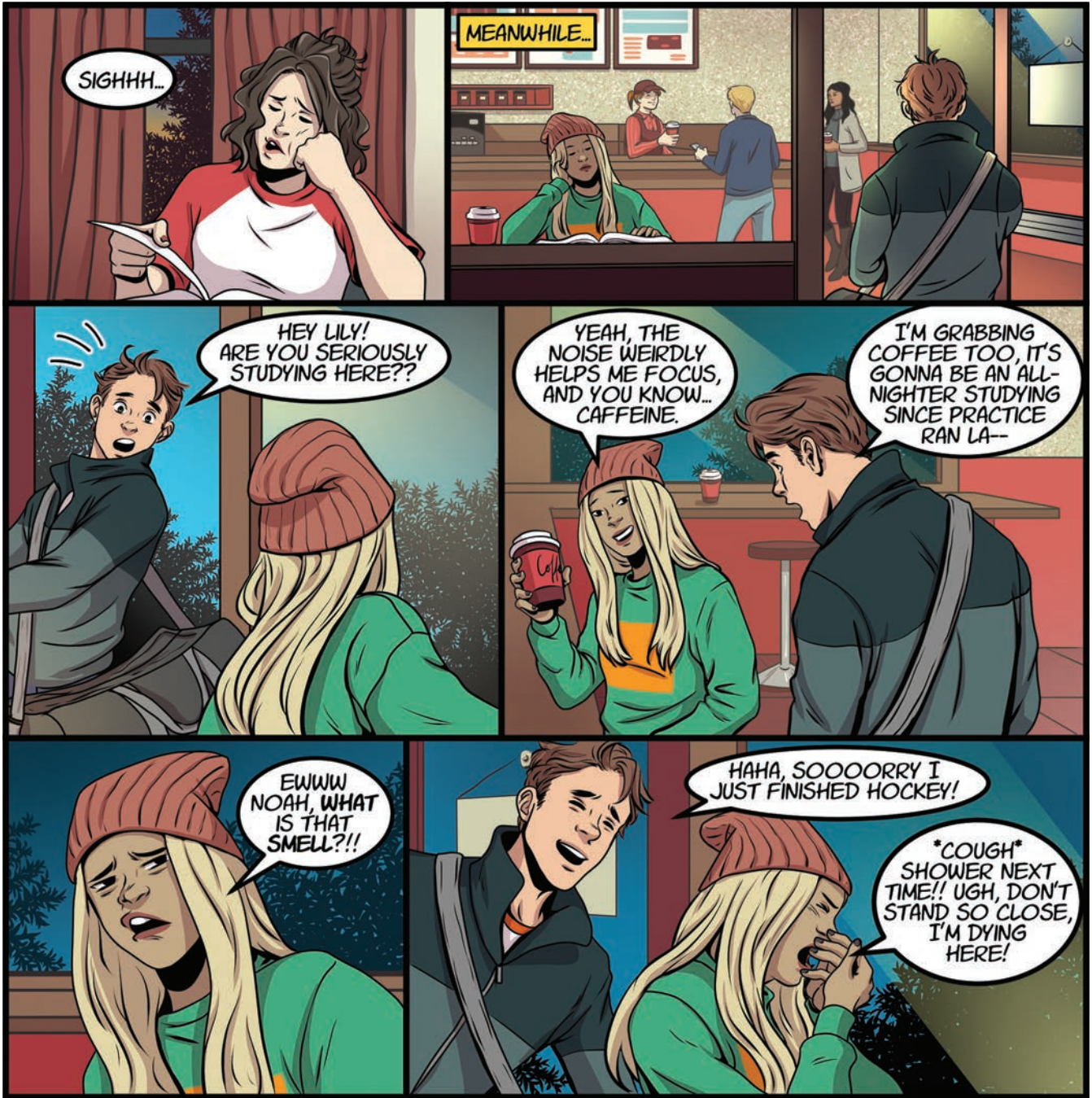
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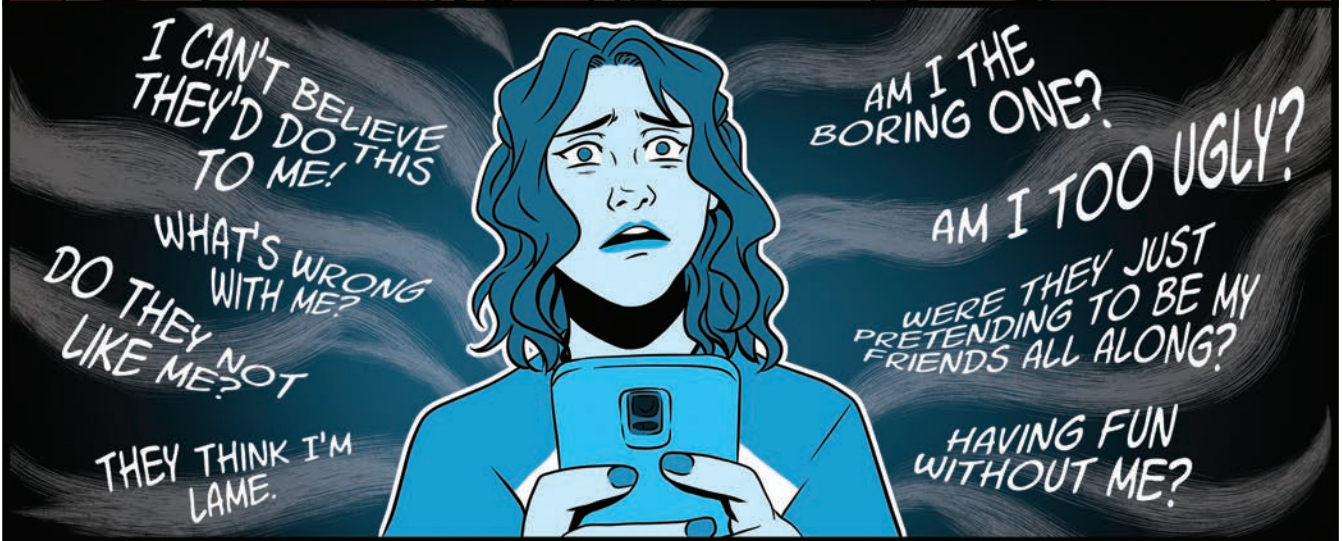
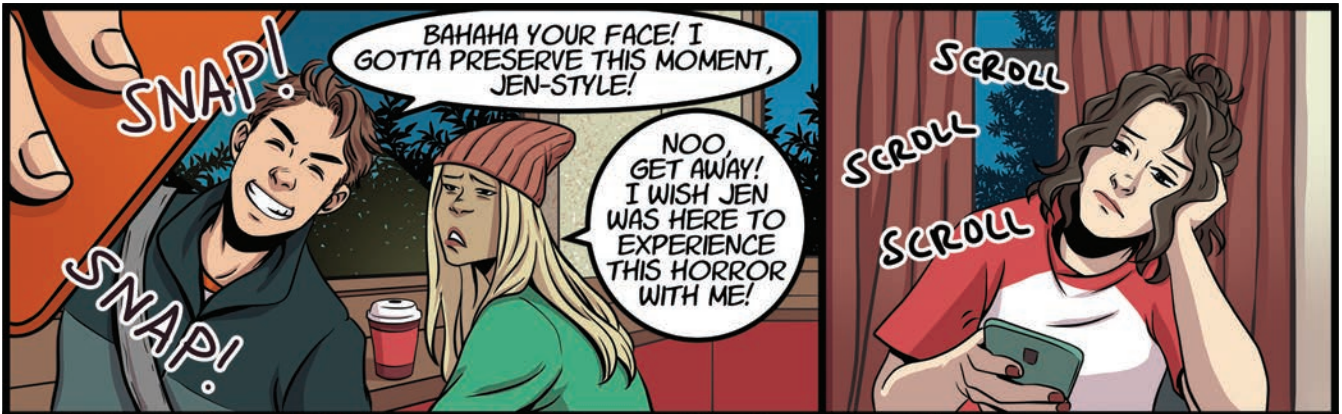
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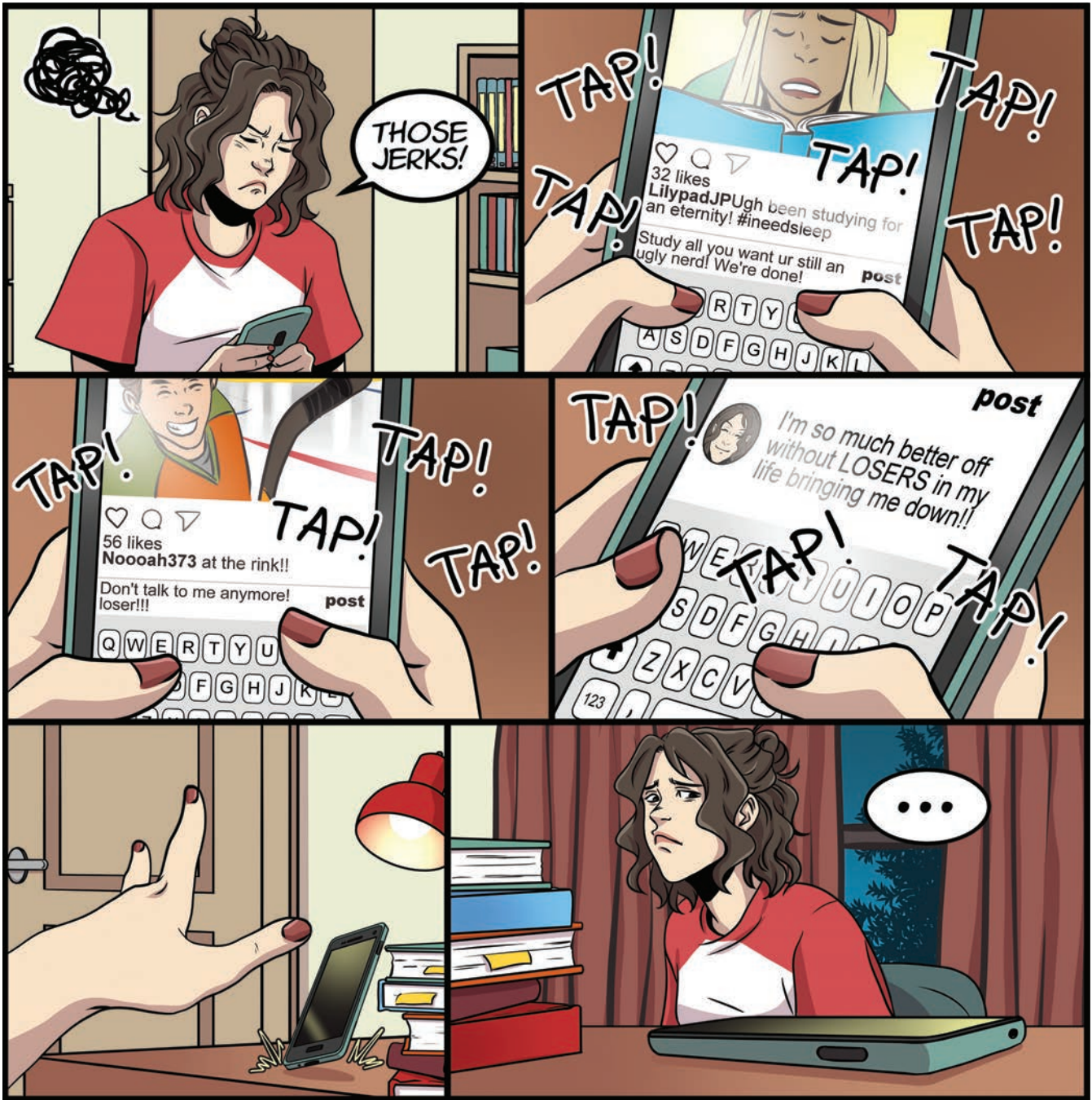
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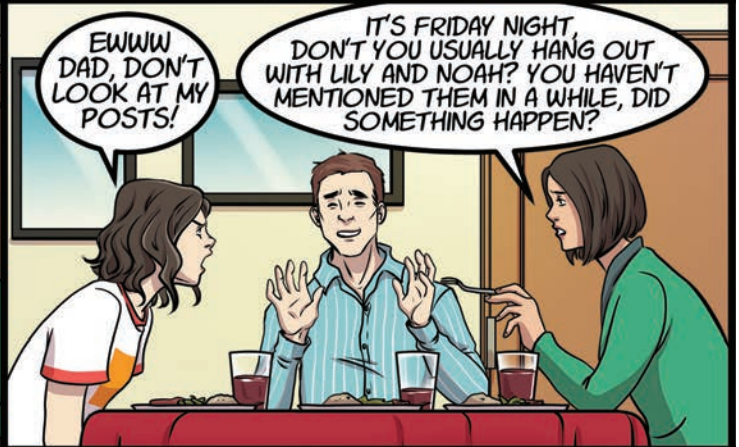
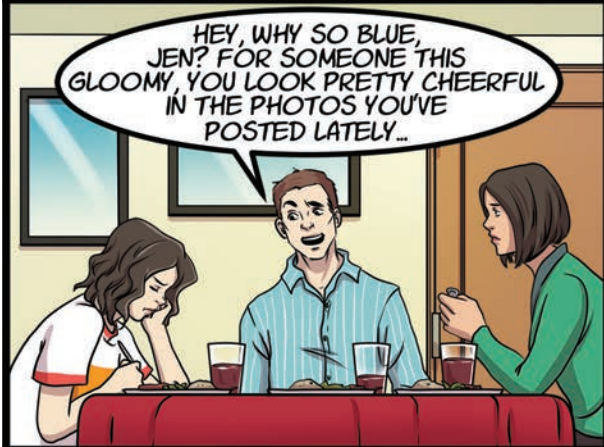
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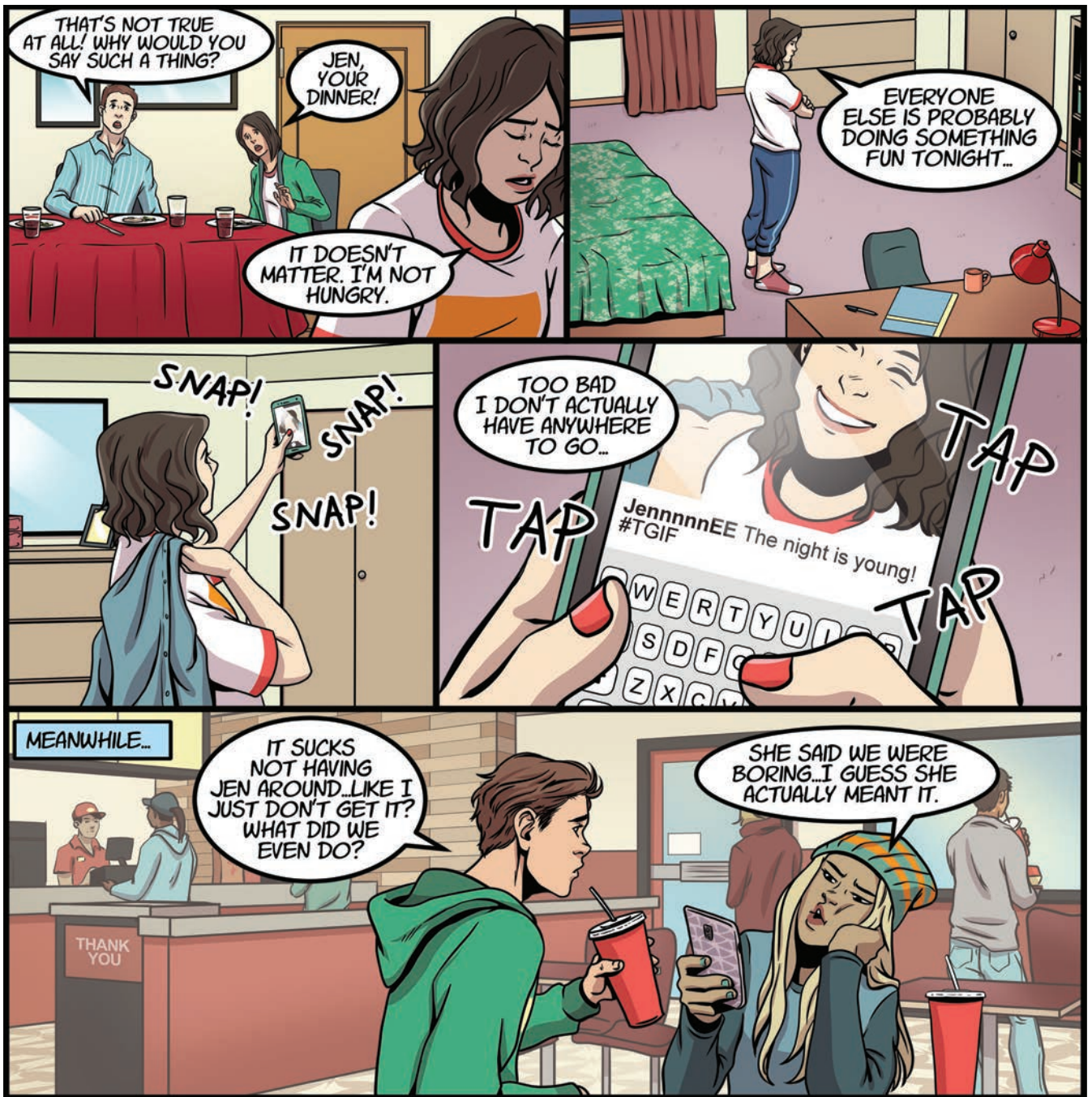
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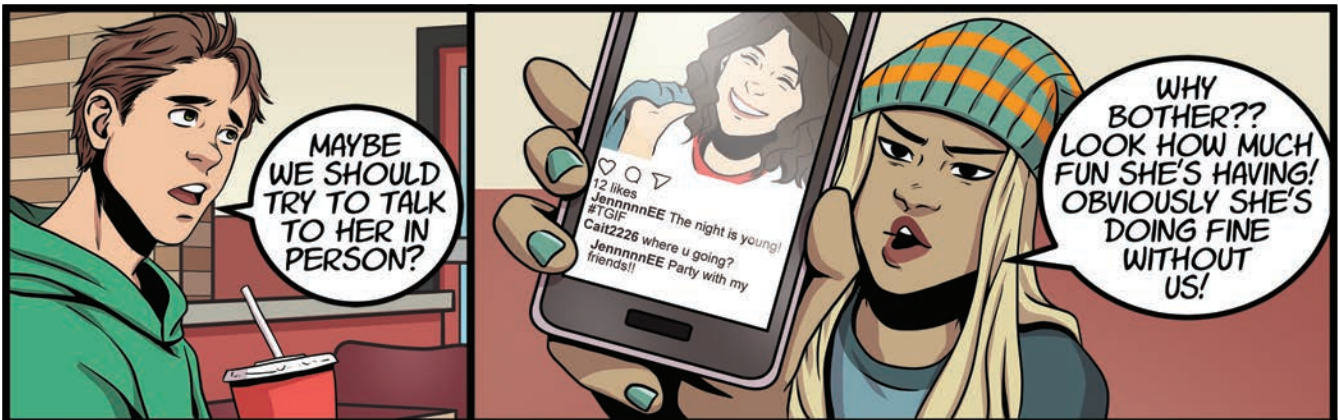
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SNAP!

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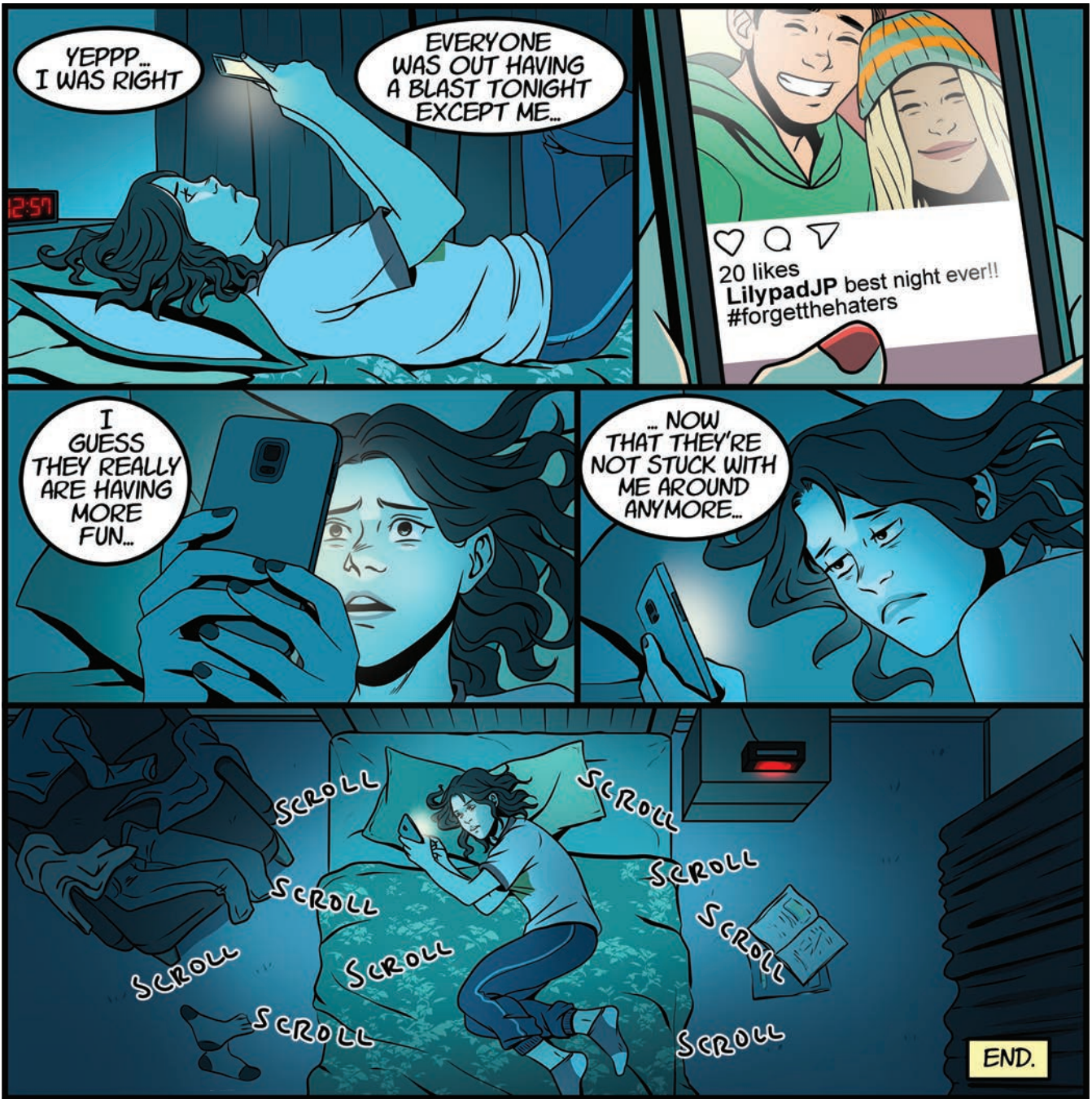
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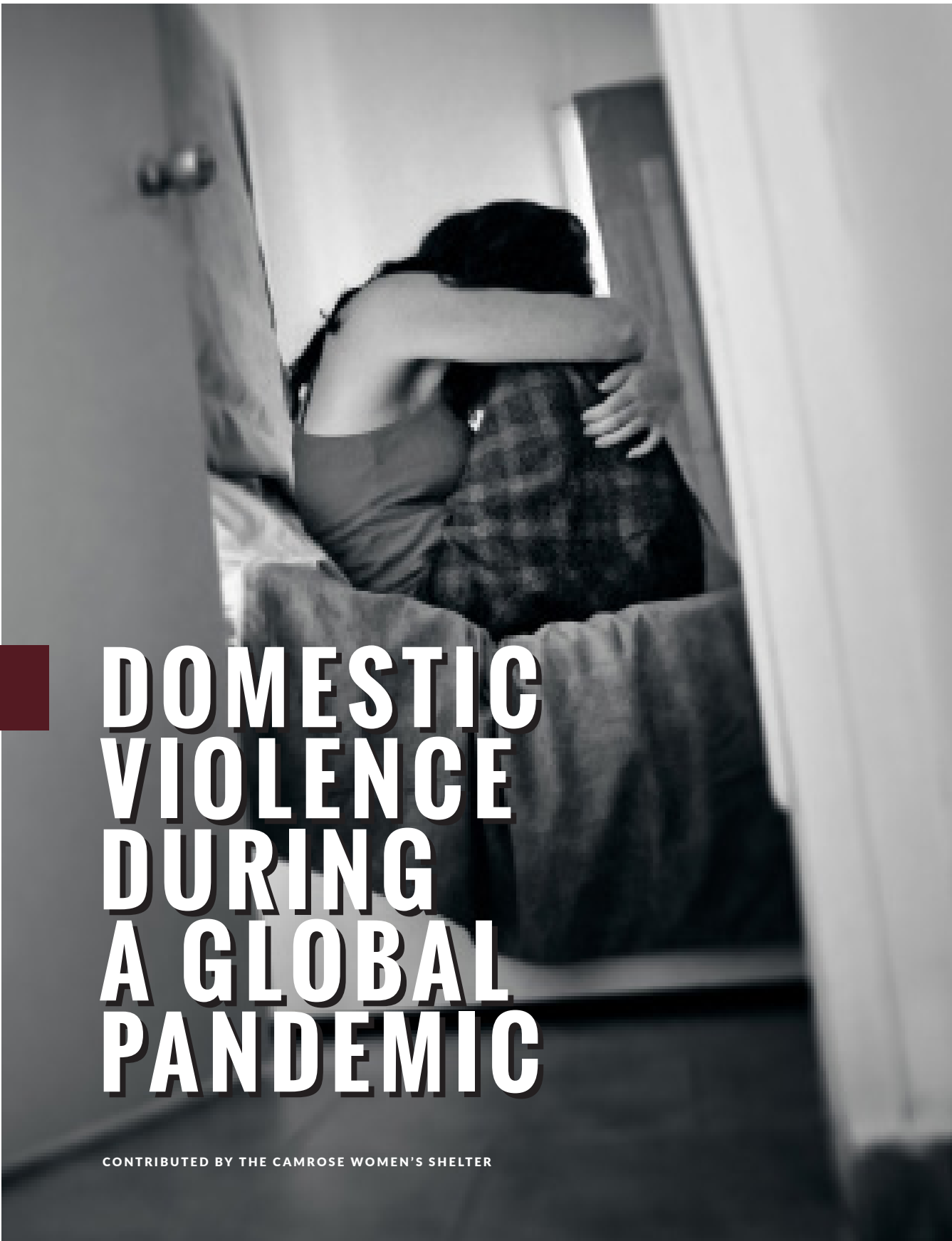
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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

CONTRIBUTED BY THE CAMROSE WOMEN'S SHELTER

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

CURING A DOMESTIC PANDEMIC

Domestic Violence is a serious issue, with many long-term effects for every person in a family. During the Covid-19 pandemic, everything stopped and the risk of a violent incident increased. Here's how it has affected families, how to recognize abuse, and what you can do about it.

The Statistics Before the Pandemic:

- Every six days a woman is killed by a former or current intimate partner in Canada
- Alberta has the 3rd largest levels of domestic violence in Canada
- Intimate partner violence accounts for 1 in every 4 violent crimes reported to police

What Changed:

- Due to isolation rules and many people being home from work, there is an increased chance of a violent incident
- Covid-19 protocols are highly triggering or reminiscent of controlling/abusive situations
- Survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) are prevented by abusers from seeking support from professional services.
- Seeking support is inhibited further by lack of technology or wifi access, lack of privacy, and discomfort in receiving face-to-face video contact in their home
- There has been an increase in the volume and severity of GBV, but the calls and reporting have decreased.

The Stats That Changed:

- 46% of support workers noticed a change in violent incidents, and 82% of those staff who work with gender-based violence (GBV) saw the change as an increase in prevalence and severity
- 54% of Victim Service agencies saw an increase in the number of domestic violence victims they helped
- Within domestic violence statements, cases of strangulation and serious physical assaults have increased

Signs You Are in an Abusive Relationship:

Beyond physical and sexual violence, there are other ways a partner can be abusive. Abuse is all about power and control. An abusive partner will find various ways to control you.

- Constant texting or calling when you are not together
- Withholding money, and/or not allowing you to make your own choices with your money
- Humiliating or shaming you, especially in front of others
- Isolating you from friends and family
- Blaming you and making everything your fault
- Threatening to commit suicide if you leave

What You Can Do For Yourself:

Recognize that it is not your fault. Repeat this line *“Abuse is not my fault, Abuse is not my fault, Abuse is not my fault”*

Know that there are organizations still operating to ensure you are not alone, and you can receive support at any time you feel ready to call. Find support close to you, and in an emergency,

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80% OF ASSAULTS HAPPEN IN THE VICTIM'S HOME

70% OF SEXUAL ASSAULTS ARE COMMITTED BY A PERPETRATOR WHO KNOWS THE VICTIMS
(friend, neighbour, relative, colleague, or other acquaintances)

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Create a personalized safety plan. This can be done on your own, by calling a women's shelter crisis line or going online. There are support workers ready to help you make a safety plan any time during the day (Some safety plan tips can be found at the end of this article)

Signs That a Friend is in an Abusive Relationship:

- Your friend's partner constantly calls and texts when you are together
- Your friend starts abruptly cancelling plans
- You feel uncomfortable with their partner
- You notice frequent cuts and bruises on your friend, or their clothing style changes unexpectedly
- Your friend is noticeably unhappy and puts their partners' needs before their own
- Your friend is distancing themselves from all of their friends; Try to stay in touch

What You Can Do For a Friend:

- Ask if your friend is ok or if they are safe
- If they disclose any abuse to you, withhold blame, judgment, and advice. Just listen in a supportive way and let them know you believe them
- Keep your own record of abusive behaviour or evidence of abuse you notice along with the date you notice it
- Let them know they are not alone and that they have choices. Many support agencies and organizations are still available to help, even if everything seems closed, phone support is readily available. Be careful not to tell them what they should do, and instead encourage them to make their own choice
- It can take time and many attempts before your friend leaves for good – be patient. This is a big step for them

How to Speak With Kids About DV in the Time of Covid-19:

- Be open and honest, kids know what's going on
- No matter what the abuser has done, don't talk negatively about them in front of the kids
- Get input from the child for the safety plan
- Ask about how they're feeling, and try to really listen and understand them
- Allow them to share whatever types of feelings they have towards the abusive parent
- Let them know you believe them if they share something
- Let them know the abuse is not their fault or your own
- Let them know you love them and want to keep them safe
- Let them know the violence is not okay, but focus on the behaviors rather than on the character of the abusive person
- Acknowledge that it might be hard or scary for them and that it's okay to feel angry, sad, scared, etc.
- Accept that they may not be willing or able to talk about it

right away

- Help them learn healthy ways of dealing with anger, fear, and other emotions
- Help them get involved in things that boost their self-esteem and make them feel good about themselves
- Always act in a way that is non-threatening and non-violent with your kids
- Consider taking them to counseling or therapy if possible
- Maintain as much structure and routine with them as you can
- Create a safety plan with them and explain actions taken in direct relation to unsafe and unhealthy behaviors

Safety Plan Tips for You:

- Know your partner's behaviours, patterns, and triggers that can lead to an incident, and what you can do to calm them down during that moment
- Have a safe room in the house, preferably one without potential weapons (such as the kitchen) and one with a window you can escape through
- Have a safe person, friend, or family member that you can stay with or call when you need to leave quickly
- Have a bag with clothes, a toothbrush, cash, and photocopies of important documents such as any form of ID, health care cards, passports, prescriptions, bank/credit cards or papers, mortgage/rental papers, etc. You can keep this bag in your car or at your friends home
- Set up private accounts that your partner cannot access. This includes bank accounts, email, and social media accounts, and any additional accounts your partner can access
- Document incidents, including the date and what happened

Safety Plan Tips for Kids:

- Have a safe room in the house for your child(ren) to go when an incident is happening
- Create a code word for them to use when they feel unsafe, or for you to let them know they need to get help or hide
- Help your child(ren) know their full name, address, and phone number
- Teach your child(ren) to call 911. You can pretend to be the operator and they can practice calling you
- Ensure they know to never get involved in an adult fight and that it is never their fault or responsibility

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CARING FOR EACH OTHER DURING A PANDEMIC

COVID-19 has turned our world upside down. We are all learning – together – about how to protect ourselves and how to keep each other safe while continuing to do the things we love. Wearing masks is something everyone is talking about these days, and many people have very strong ideas about what is right for Saskatchewan.

For many of us with healthy, strong immune systems, the thought of wearing a mask in public is confusing. We think to ourselves: “Why, if I am young and healthy, do I need to wear a mask?”.

The answer is simple: We don’t do it for ourselves, we do it for those around us who are not strong enough to fight off the virus as well as we can.

It’s for our grandparents, or people with more serious sicknesses like diabetes, asthma, or heart problems. These people could get very sick and even end up in hospital if they catch the virus. So, wearing a mask is about working together to look after the people around us who need extra protection, those we love and care about, and yes, even the strangers, like grocery store workers, we meet in our everyday lives.

When the virus spreads between people going about their lives – shopping, eating out, going to the gym, and many other regular activities – it is called “community transmission”. If this

starts to happen too often and too many people become infected with the virus, we start to lose control and put those who might get the sickest and have the hardest time recovering, like our senior citizens, at risk. Wearing masks when out and about is a great tool to help keep community transmission as low as possible.

Other things we can do to help slow the spread of COVID-19 include: practicing social distancing when in public by staying at least two meters apart, washing our hands regularly, always staying home when we are sick, avoiding hangouts with large groups of people, and making sure our closest circle of friends and family – our bubble – remains small and is always made up of the same people. These are acts of respect, and they show that we care about one another – two things Saskatchewan citizens have always been proud of.

Registered nurses in Saskatchewan are asking everyone to please do their part and work together to slow the spread of COVID-19. It will save lives, keep our province safe, and we can all continue to do the things we love with the people we love. Wearing a mask and following all of the safety tips is a “WE” thing, not a “me” thing.

BY HEATHER GUNN



DEAR HR: ADVICE FOR YOUR WORK RELATIONSHIPS

TORY MCNALLY, CPHR - DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES
LEGACY BOWES

It is possible that you will spend more time with your co-workers than your friends and family. Here is some advice to help you create positive work relationships and deal with some difficult situations you may encounter.

Dear HR: The office gossip keeps inviting me for lunch, what do I do?

The first thing is to recognize that you do not have to go if you do not want to. Say you need to run an errand or would prefer to eat at your desk. Be careful not to share anything with them that you do not want the entire office to know...for obvious reasons!

Office gossip is sometimes legitimate. If someone is honestly frustrated with their job, they need to get it off their chest – encourage co-workers to approach a supervisor so the problem can be dealt with.

If all else fails, change the subject. Keep talk at the office light and professional and try not to get roped into complaining sessions. Remember, you can always say that you

have to get back to work!

Dear HR: My boss makes comments about the way I look. Is that okay?

A boss complimenting you on your outfit or asking you where you bought your adorable boots may be their way of building rapport. Supervisors may also be tasked with enforcing the corporate dress code so it may not even be personal. However, if it makes you feel uncomfortable, there are several steps you need to take.

It is never okay for anyone to make you feel body conscious at work. If this is happening, you must tell them to stop. You can bring a support person with you to have the face-to-face conversation or do it within sight of co-workers but the best way to stop the behaviour is to tell them it is not acceptable.

If the comments do not stop, document all of the interactions that you have with that person and lodge a formal, written complaint. You are protected by the Human Rights Act and deserve to be treated respect-



fully and professionally.

Dear HR: My co-worker is so loud that I cannot concentrate. Can I tell him to be quiet?

Of course you can!

Use “I” statements, for instance, “I am having trouble concentrating”, rather than “you” statements which may be perceived as more of an attack.

Walk over and have the conversation rather than yelling across the office (kind of defeats the purpose!).

Say something like “I know you are not being loud on purpose but...”

When all else fails, plug in the noise cancelling headphones.

Dear HR: My co-worker stands around while I do most of the work. How do I get them to step up?

Teamwork makes the dreamwork – unless it doesn’t!

In order to act as a team, everyone needs to feel a sense of belonging. Take the time to get to know your co-worker. Talk about light topics that you have in common and the sense of comradery will grow.

Show gratitude for the work they do get done. Complimenting them on their skills will create positive interactions.

Take time at the beginning to divide the work evenly and set reporting milestones for large projects so you can both share what you are working on before someone gets off track or behind.

Remember, there may be something happening outside of your co-worker’s day job that is causing them to be unproductive. Be supportive and understanding as they may be going through a difficult time.



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It's dark. It's 4 am. The messages keep coming.

"I thought I blocked him," thinks Eve. "How did he find me on snap again? He must have created another account."

"I can't take this anymore, after what he did to me. I don't want anyone to find out, especially my parents."

She covers her face with her blankets, burrowing deeper into her bed to escape. Her phone partially covered by her pillow flashes again. Another message from someone who hurt her.

Eve feels like she's alone. Flashbulb memories appear from the worst night of her life. She would just really like to forget what happened.

"Can I report this?" she wonders. "I want him to stop this and not hurt someone else."

Outside her bedroom, her house, a storm is swirling, much like the storm in her brain.

"Snapchat was my place, something fun to do," Eve thinks. "He took that away from me. Now he's back, messaging me to meet up again, like I would want to."

She remembers a number a friend gave her a few weeks ago. She told Eve "text whenever." Eve picks up her phone, still under her blankets and types in the number and a simple "hello."

Within seconds a volunteer has responded. They chat back and forth a little. The volunteer, an individual specially trained to talk about sexual violence, listens and provides support. They are a reassuring presence for Eve, letting her know through clicks of the keyboard that she is not alone. She is believed. It is not her fault.

At the end of the chat about thirty minutes later, Eve feels supported and relieved, especially because she was able to share what happened and how it has affected her. She has her next steps in mind and will take them when she's ready.

The above scenario is an example of an experience someone may have when they reach out to the Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Centre's (CASASC) 24 Hour Sexual Violence Text, Webchat and Phone Help Line.

For over 35 years CASASC has provided a range of sexual violence supports in central Alberta including counselling, play therapy, police and court support, crisis support and education.

CASASC began operating a phone crisis line in 1985 to respond to the need in the community. In May 2016 the 24 hour text and webchat help line was launched as an additional safe and accessible option. It was the first sexual violence text/webchat-based help line in Canada.

When COVID-19 brought Alberta to a standstill in March, survivors turned to the CASASC help line with increased need. The help line is a simple driver to weather the ongoing storm – support those who have been affected by sexual violence in Alberta.

"For any feelings that come up, the questions that you have, our caring compassionate, trained volunteers are here 24 hours for you," said Erin Willmer, CASASC Interim Volunteer Team Lead. "Information, referrals and resources are provided in real time."

"Whether you've recently experienced sexual violence, you are a friend of someone who has is the past or you are a support person who has a question, our volunteers are there to support and listen. We are here to connect with you wherever you are and empower you to your next steps towards healing."

The CASASC help line provides anonymous, confidential support when you need it. It is available 24 hours, 365 days a year to all Albertans.

Text or call anytime at 1-866-956-1099

Webchat at www.casasc.ca

The graphic features the CASASC logo (Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Centre) with a stylized figure. To the right, a purple circle contains the text "Supporting all of Alberta!". Below the logo, the text reads: "We are here for you! Support when you need it: 24 Hour Sexual Violence Text, Webchat and Phone Help Line." To the right of this, it lists "24 Hour Support" with "Text, Online Chat, or Call, we are here to help." and provides the phone number "1-866-956-1099". Below that, it lists "Online Chat" and "Phone" with the same phone number. The website "www.casasc.ca" is written vertically on the right side.



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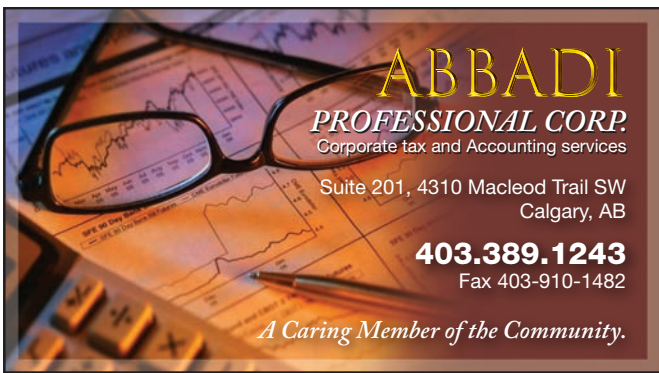
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SETTING BOUNDARIES - MANAGING CYBER BULLYING IN THE

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This analogy is now frequently used to illustrate setting boundaries in our digital spaces. Whether it be our social media platforms, our inboxes, or our websites there is a need to call time-out on those who insist on crossing those boundaries and bullying us in our homes.

Cyberbullying is defined as bullying behavior in the form of intimidation, threats, humiliation and harassment that takes place through the use of computers, cellphones or other electronic devices.

Bullying may be associated with youth, but not all bullying ends as children become adults. We now understand that a significant amount of bullying happens to adults and it's happening more frequently at work. According to Statistics Canada; 40% of Canadians are bullied in the workplace every week.

In a school setting, the "3R" Approach is taught early – Recognize, Respond, and Report. But what about in a workplace? Do the 3 R's still apply? They do!

Recognize - If a colleague posts something false or attacks you online, first pause. Review the message, perhaps it's a miscommunication. Frequently our interpretation is different than the intention. Can it be ignored? It's common for a cyber bully to be looking for a reaction. If you get upset, post or say something you later regret, this could hurt your position at work.

Respond - The best practice is to respond rather than react. If it cannot be ignored, take a moment to gather your thoughts. If possible, meet in person and communicate honestly about what you found offensive and that you want it to end.

Report - If the behavior continues, it's time to involve management. And here's where we can add a fourth R:



Record - Keep a record of everything. Save all communication for reporting purposes. This includes emails, messages, social media posts, text messages comments etc. This will greatly assist with any internal or external investigations.

Remember threats of death, threats of physical violence or indications of stalking behaviors are against the law and should be reported immediately.

Should employees be left on their own to navigate the murky waters of online communication? What responsibility do organizations have to support their employees and manage cyberbullying?

Every organization should have clear policies about what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Educate and train staff and upper management about bullying and cyberbullying.

If an employee comes to you with a complaint, listen carefully, take it seriously, and investigate the situation quickly and

thoroughly. Offer support for the target to help with coping strategies and support via employee benefits.

As for the bully, early intervention is essential. With coaching and willingness on their part it is possible to overcome personal limitations. If this fails the organization must ensure that the bully is held accountable and disciplined according to policy. That may include termination.

If it becomes too complex to manage internally, it may be wise to hire an outside consultant for unbiased expertise on how to manage the matter according to not only company policy but workplace law.

As we spend more time in our digital home it is critical that the boundaries are set and enforced from the top down.

BY HEATHER DZIOPA
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CREATING DEEP CONNECTIONS IN CRISIS

BY PHILLIP HICKS



If you know someone who feels depressed or suicidal, there are things you can do to help dissuade them from following through on their suicidal ideation.

Here are five different ways to create deep connections and resonance with those who need it most.

Listen like nobody else

It is really easy to let your own emotions get in the way when speaking to someone you care about who doesn't feel like there

is any point in them existing.

When we let our emotions get in the way, we go into 'fix-it' or 'make it better' mode. This does nothing except make you like everyone else: unable to hear their thoughts and be with their feelings, which they are so desperately trying to escape themselves.

Most people who are idealizing suicide are longing for deep connection, to know people care about them and to know that they are cared about. When you start trying to fix things you stop listening and are searching for answers. That creates disconnection.

Acknowledge them

When someone is sharing their pain and despair, acknowledge it.

Thank them for sharing it with you. You will likely surprise them, because often people who are suicidal don't want to tell anyone for fear of burdening them with their negativity. When you thank them, you open up the door to more sharing.

Acknowledge the 'suck' they are talking about. If they tell you they went through a horrible, painful experience like abuse or divorce, tell them how much that must have sucked, and that you're not surprised that they feel so bad about it. It validates

When you start trying to fix things you stop listening and are searching for answers. That creates disconnection.

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their feelings; not as a way to keep them feeling that way, but instead for them to know that it's okay to feel that way.

Find out what is important to them

Values are the things that we hold most sacred to ourselves. They are personal and unique to all of us. When someone is telling you their struggles and pain, listen for their values.

I once sat with a friend who was about to take his life. He felt like he had failed his family, friends and that he was going to hell for all the pain he'd caused. Just listening to him I heard religion was important to him and we started talking about his faith and forgiveness. Religion is not something that is important to me, but this was not about me. This was about him, his needs, and how he felt.

We talked at length about God and religion, and discussed how religion teaches about forgiveness as much as punishment. We talked about what was important to him about his faith, and then I spoke to those values. I also told him that if he decided against taking his life, I would be there to reconnect him to his values when he got lost and overwhelmed. I also told him that if he did try to kill himself, I'd still be there with him and wouldn't abandon him, so he'd see that at least one person cares about him.

Be there for them no matter what

When someone shares their feelings with you, they may fear that you'll abandon them like other people in their life have. They feel like a burden.

Keep reassuring them that you will be there for them if they decide to carry on. Be there as someone to listen, be there as someone to go with them to see a doctor, or be there to keep them company.

Don't underestimate companionships

When someone feels lost and like ending their life, there is often a longing to not feel alone. Your company and desire to be there can be the most magical medicine. You don't even have to say anything. If you can be completely relaxed and just be there, you're winning a big battle.

In our digital age, it is often hard to remember what compassion and care look like

their raw forms, since so much of our lives are on social media where cries for help get emoji reactions without any substance.

Physical connection cannot be replaced by emails, online messages, or texts. It is something that requires you to be present. It is a human craving to feel connected to others, and no amount of social media or online forums can make up for physical presence with someone.

Nurture it and honour the need. It saves people's lives.

The most important part of being there for someone who is in need is being able to just 'be'. Be peaceful, listen, be calm, and be present. The chaos will calm when you do. Important note – if you are supporting someone with mental health issues or who is suicidal, do not forget to look after yourself. Find someone you can talk to – you do not have to do it alone either, and it can be mentally exhausting helping people no matter how much you want to be there.

BY HEATHER GUNN



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CAN I EVEN START A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP NOW DURING COVID-19? WHAT WOULD THAT EVEN LOOK LIKE?



Even though Covid-19 has made things a little weird, life and dating go on. Fortunately, these challenging times can provide a great opportunity to see how a new partner will behave under fire. When considering a new relationship with someone, especially now, let us point out a couple of red flags:

Red Flag #1: Do they make fun of my worries about safety?

It is one thing to make fun of how silly we look with masks on all

the time, but if your potential partner does not want to wear one and makes fun of you for wanting to, that is a red flag. The pandemic is real, and many people are affected, including our loved ones. Safety concerns aside, in a relationship you will disagree, and it is important that when you have disagreements, they respect that you do not see everything their way. Mocking and ridicule are signs that they do not respect your views as much as their own.

Red Flag #2: Are they as interested as I am in making this work?

Sure, it can be hard to find things to do that are not sitting at home or going out for walks. However, if you are the only one trying to spend time together or get to know the other person, that is not setting up a healthy future. The amount of effort that they put in is probably its highest at the beginning of something new. If they are not trying to connect with you, asking questions to get to know you, or even trying to make things work now, chances are they will not do it later.

This is a hard time for many people. Some people may not be at their best. They need support and you may want to provide that (which is great of you!) but this may not be a good time for a relationship. Those red flags are indicators that important elements necessary for a healthy relationship may not be there right now.

Okay, so if there are no red flags and you really like them - What now?

First, know what is important to you; communicate and stand by your boundaries. Telling people what your boundaries are and having them respected is important in any healthy relationship. For example, you value making your own decisions, but while out for dinner, your partner orders for you, saying that they know what you will like. You may be open to trying it, but this is when you could say, "Oh, I really don't like you making decisions for me. Please do not do that again; just ask instead." Boundaries tell people how

we want to be treated. If people do not respect your boundaries, they're telling you they don't respect you.

Relationships are often filled with so many things that are un-said, so there may not actually be a clear "Go Go Go!". For most people, we spend time getting to know one another, and before you know it, it is clear to both people that they really like each other. To get there, get to know them as they get to know you in ways that feel safe for both of you. If you need something more explicit, that sounds like an opportunity to set a boundary (e.g., "This may be a little weird to ask, but are we on a date? I just want to make sure."). And if it is not going anywhere, that is okay too.

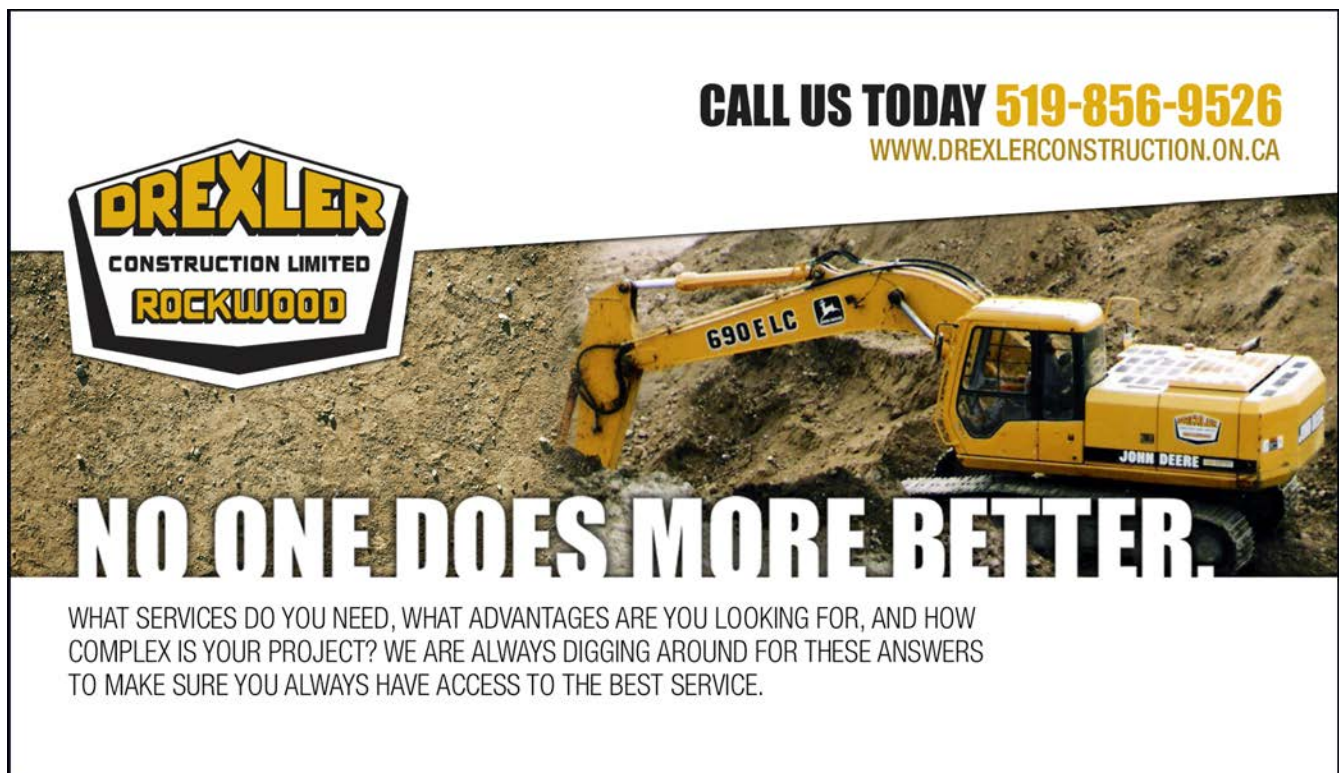
A healthy relationship is worth a million unhealthy ones.

BY HEATHER GUNN



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- Tommy D.



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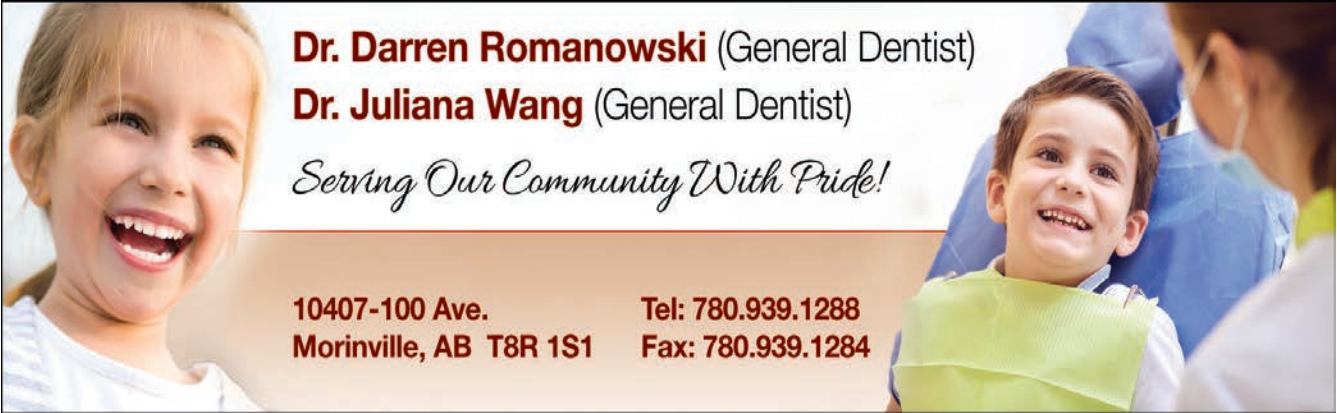


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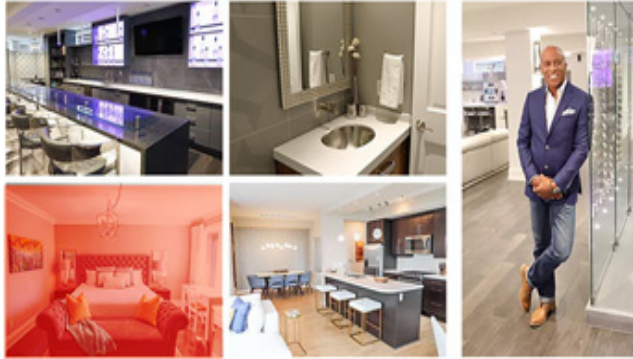
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