

DIGITAL EVIDENCE COLLECTION GUIDE

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Produced by:

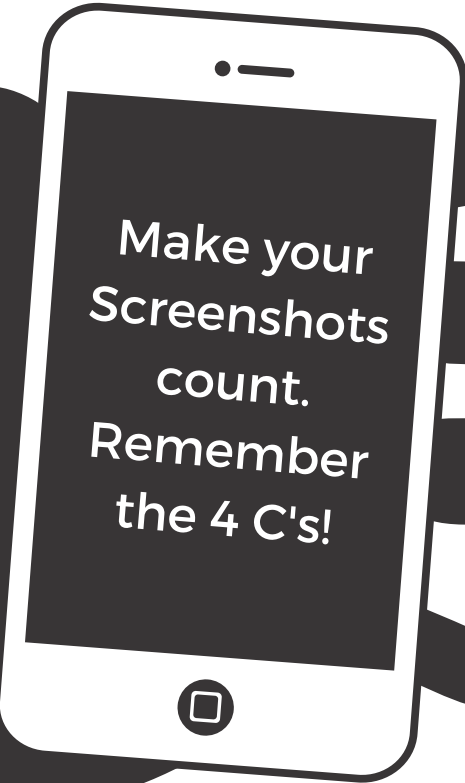


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Digital Evidence Gathering & Safekeeping

If you've experienced cyber abuse -- whether a partner is sending threatening or controlling messages, constantly calling, or if someone has shared your intimate images without consent -- the digital evidence left behind can be used in civil and criminal court cases, including protection orders. Even if you aren't ready to pursue legal action, documenting and storing digital evidence gives you options if you change your mind later.

You can use screenshots of text messages, social media posts, emails, phone call logs, voicemails, and so much more.



Make your
Screenshots
count.
Remember
the 4 C's!

CONTACT INFO & DATE

COMplete CONTEXT

CONTROL POSTS

CONFIDENTIAL STORAGE

C ONTACT INFO & DATE

Screenshots should include details that identify the person who is abusing you, such as their name, user/profile name, profile picture, and phone number as they appear on your device. Also include the date & timestamp of the communication. Judges won't know who was contacting you or when without these identifying details.



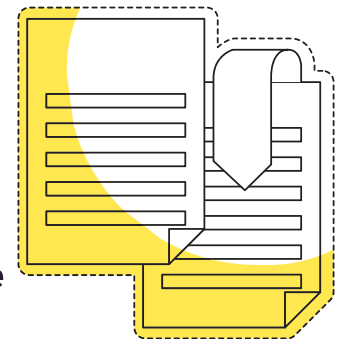
C OMplete CONTEXT

Screenshots of texts, emails, chats, or direct messages should include all original messages exchanged by both people - even if you think it looks bad or embarrassing. Remember, Judges can compare your screenshots with the other person's copies. Also capture past messages in an email chain or prior communications that help add context. Make sure to overlap text message screenshots (see how on the next page).



C ONTROL POSTS

Screenshot abusive posts on social media as soon as you see them to capture evidence of posts you don't control. Remember, people can delete content from their page or block others at any time. Some apps also delete content automatically. Friends can also help get screenshots of posts if you do not have access to the original post/page.



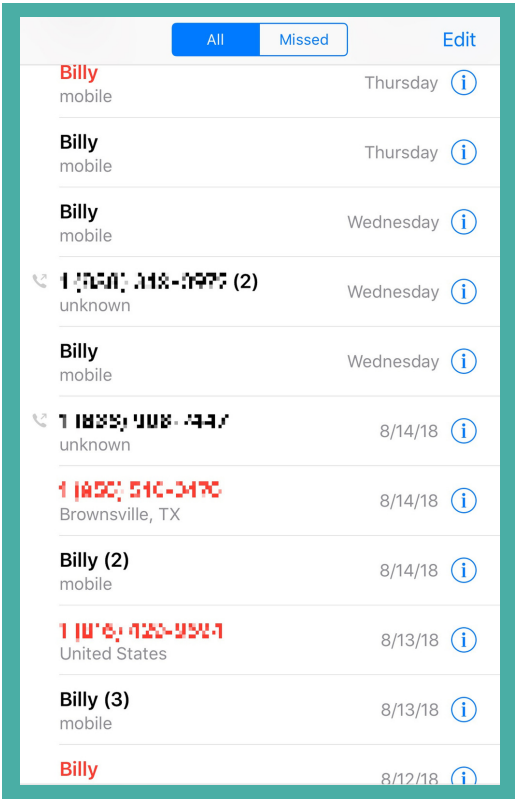
C ONFIDENTIAL STORAGE

Devices get broken, lost, stolen, monitored, and hacked, so they are not a good place to store your evidence. Once you've taken screenshots, immediately send them to a secure email account or cloud that only you have access to. You can also send them to a friend, advocate, or attorney who can keep a copy for you. Print and keep a copy if it is safe to do so. Some state's laws may require consent before sharing intimate images. If your screenshots include intimate images, consult a lawyer for more information about issues of consent in your state.



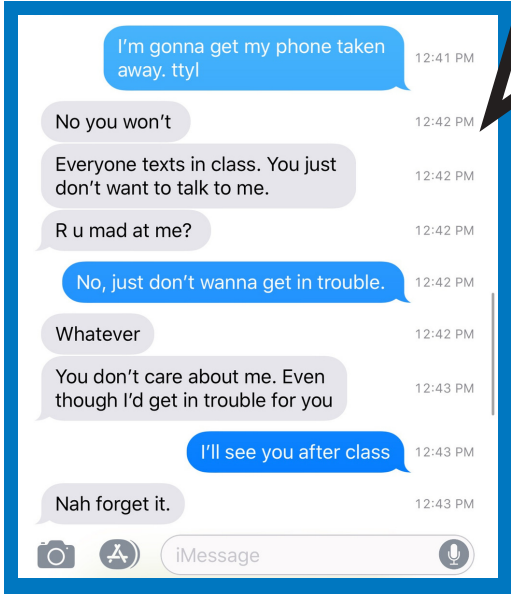
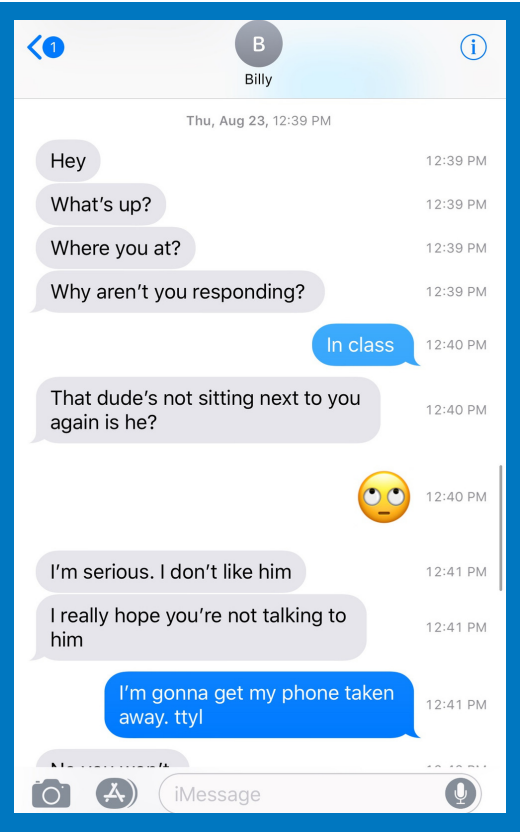
The practices above are helpful but are no substitute for the judgment of a survivor and their attorney. Consult an attorney or legal advocate for more information about evidence and its uses in court cases. Visit breakthecycle.org to find a cyber safety plan and information about our legal services.

PHONE CALLS & VOICEMAILS



Screenshot voicemail & call logs showing # of calls, caller's information, & dates (some devices show the day instead of date). Keep notes detailing what happened on answered calls, especially if you're able to identify an unknown/restricted number.

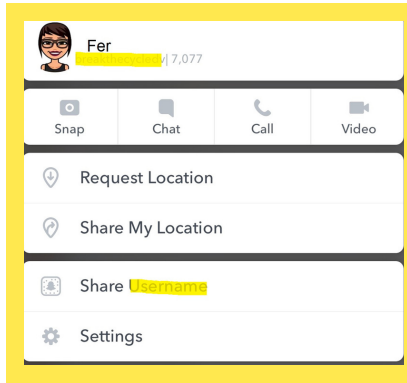
TEXT & EMAILS



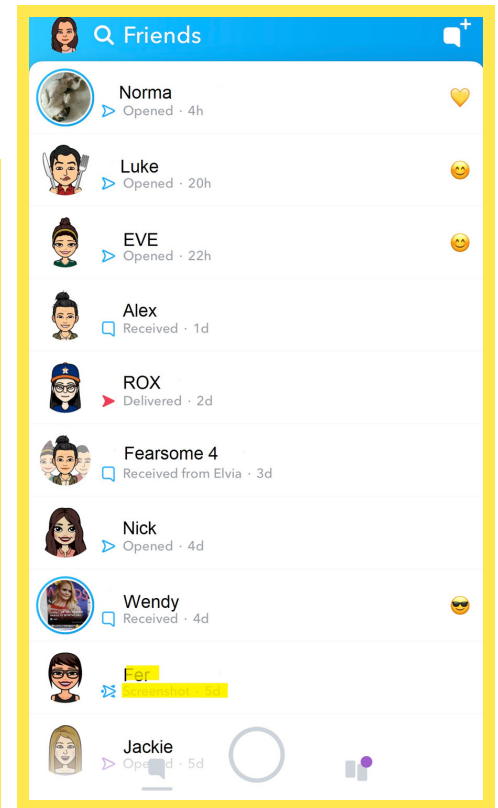
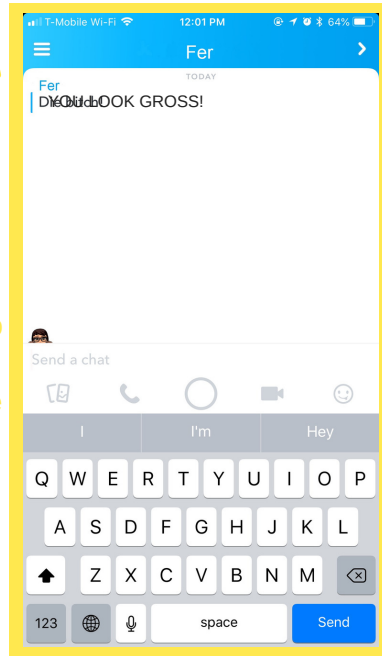
Capture identifying information such as name, phone number/email address, the dates of messages, & the subject line from emails. Keep screenshots of previous & on-going messages in the conversation in order to show the flow of the conversation.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Screenshot identifying information & all related messages. Because Snapchat & Instagram notify users when screenshots are taken, consider taking a photo of the content on your phone from another phone. You can also report online misconduct to the social media platform.



CLICK
the menu tab
to get full
details of the
snap.



Capture the user's name, picture, & identifying information listed in the user's channel, and screenshot the on-going conversation & messages. Consider reporting online misconduct if safe to do so.

ONLINE GAMING & FORUMS



CLICK the
"Go to channel"
tab to get the
platform user's full
details.

