

What to Do When You're Pulled Over While Driving

Driver Version



Created in collaboration with

**Special Needs Support Center
Police Officers of the Upper Valley
Dartmouth Senior Design Challenge**

Preface

What is a traffic stop?

Traffic stops, which are also commonly referred to as being “pulled over,” are a temporary detention of the driver of a vehicle by the police to investigate a potential crime or minor law violation.

What is the purpose of this social story?

The purpose of this story is to walk you through the experience of being pulled over as a driver. The prospect of being pulled over can be stressful, so we want to help you feel more confident to safely interact with police officers by preparing you for what to expect and what to do if the situation ever arises.

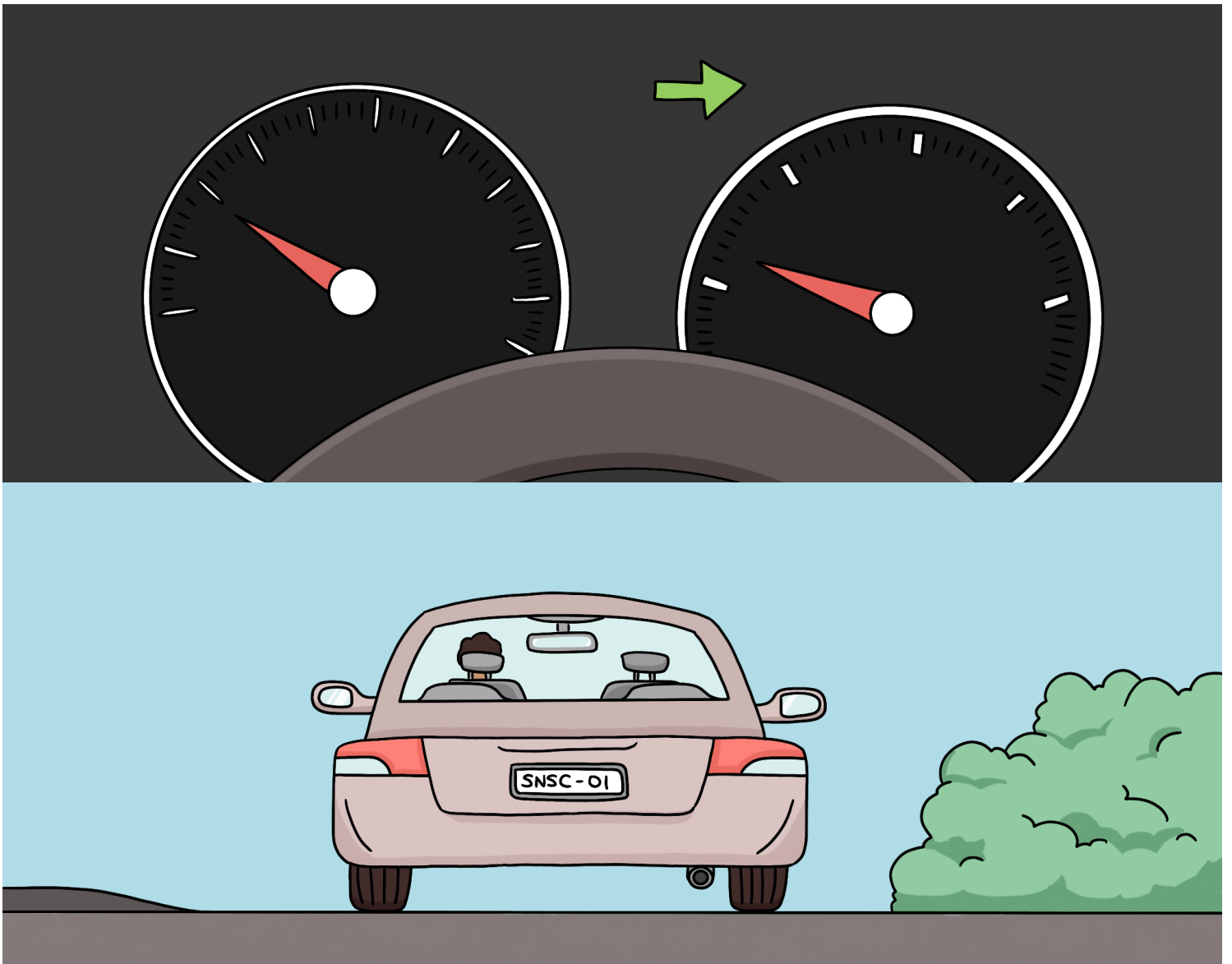
Disclaimer:

The scenario in this social story is a general outline of what to expect in a traffic stop, drawn from verified online sources and endorsed by local NH/VT police officers.

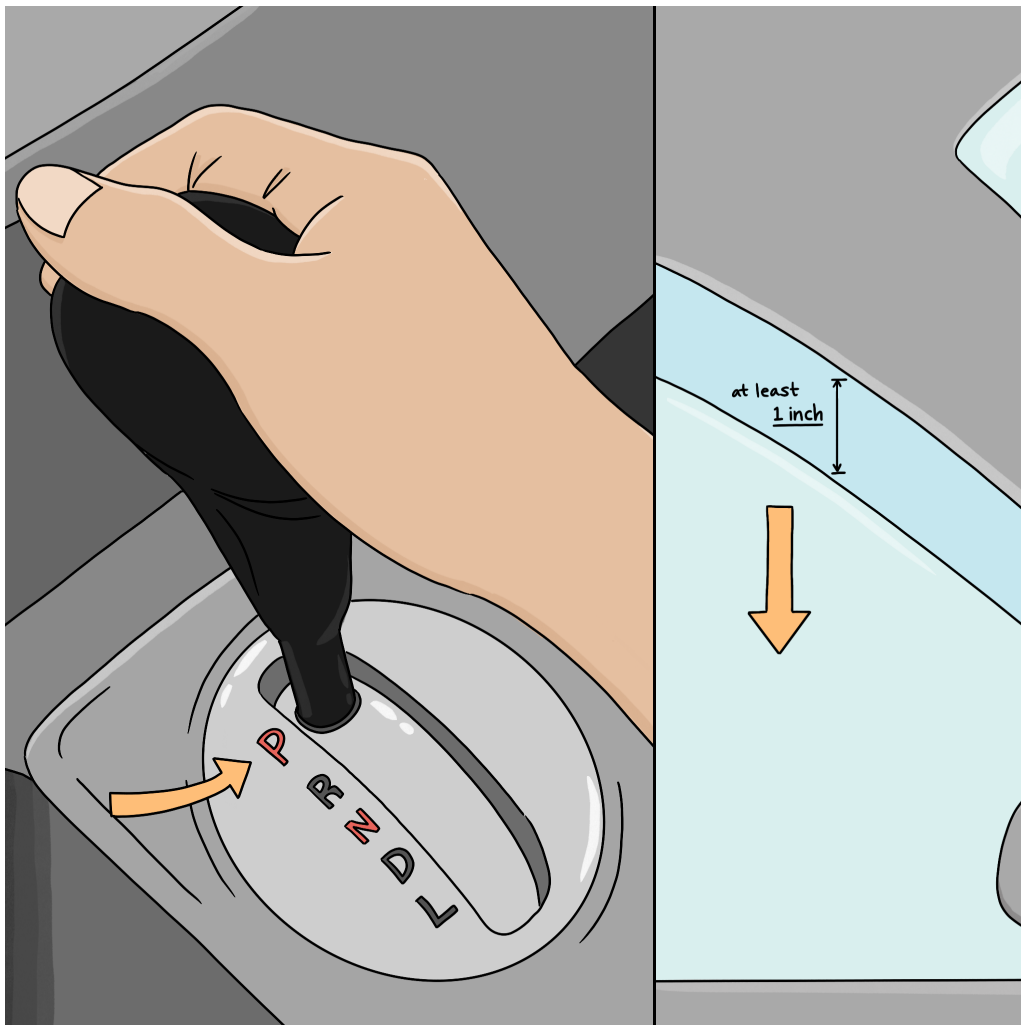
However, each traffic stop situation is different and may be handled differently depending on the police officer.



Kyle is driving on the highway when he notices that a police car is following him with its blue lights flashing.



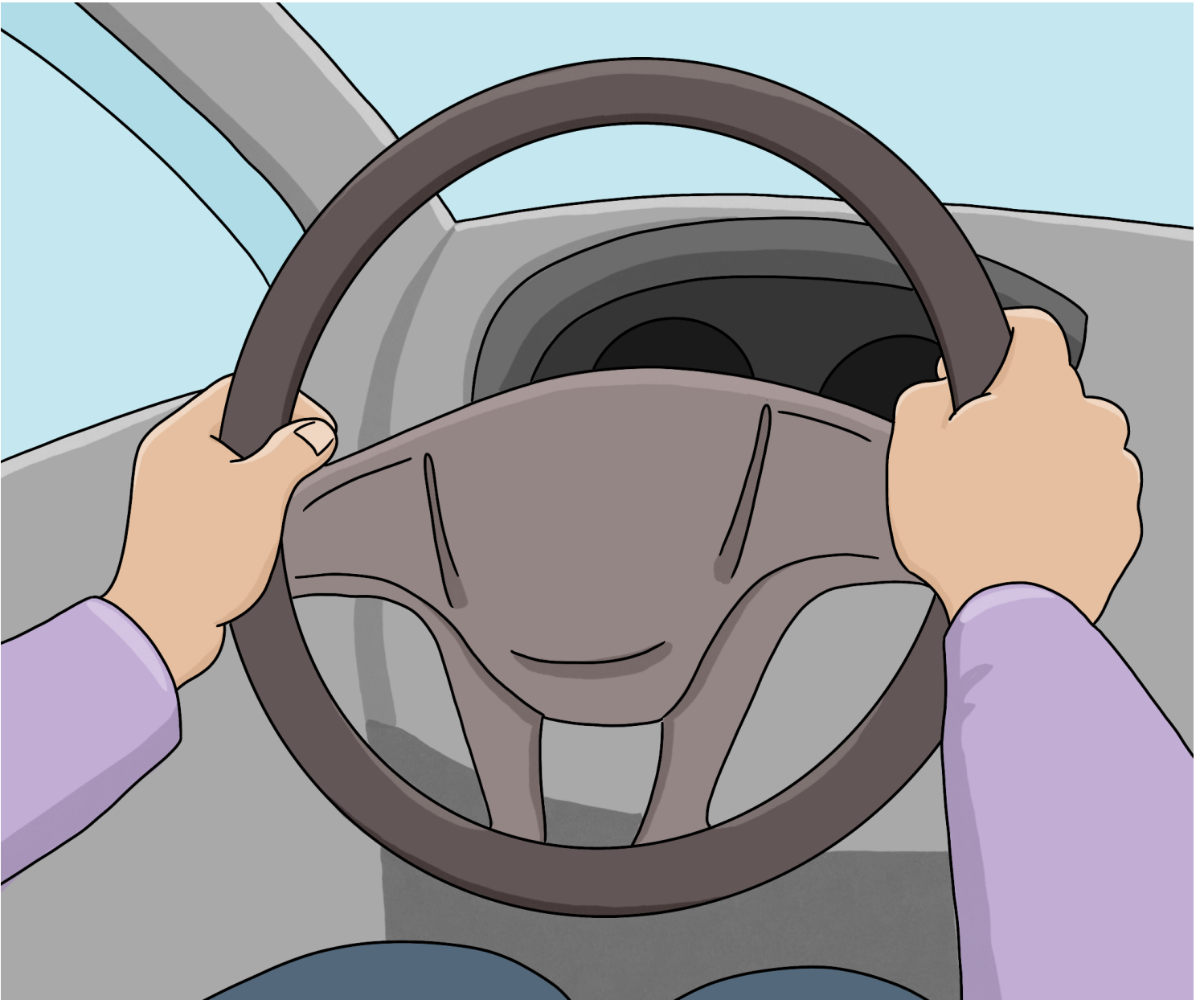
Kyle uses his right turn signal to show the police officer that he understands and is trying to pull over to the right side of the road safely.



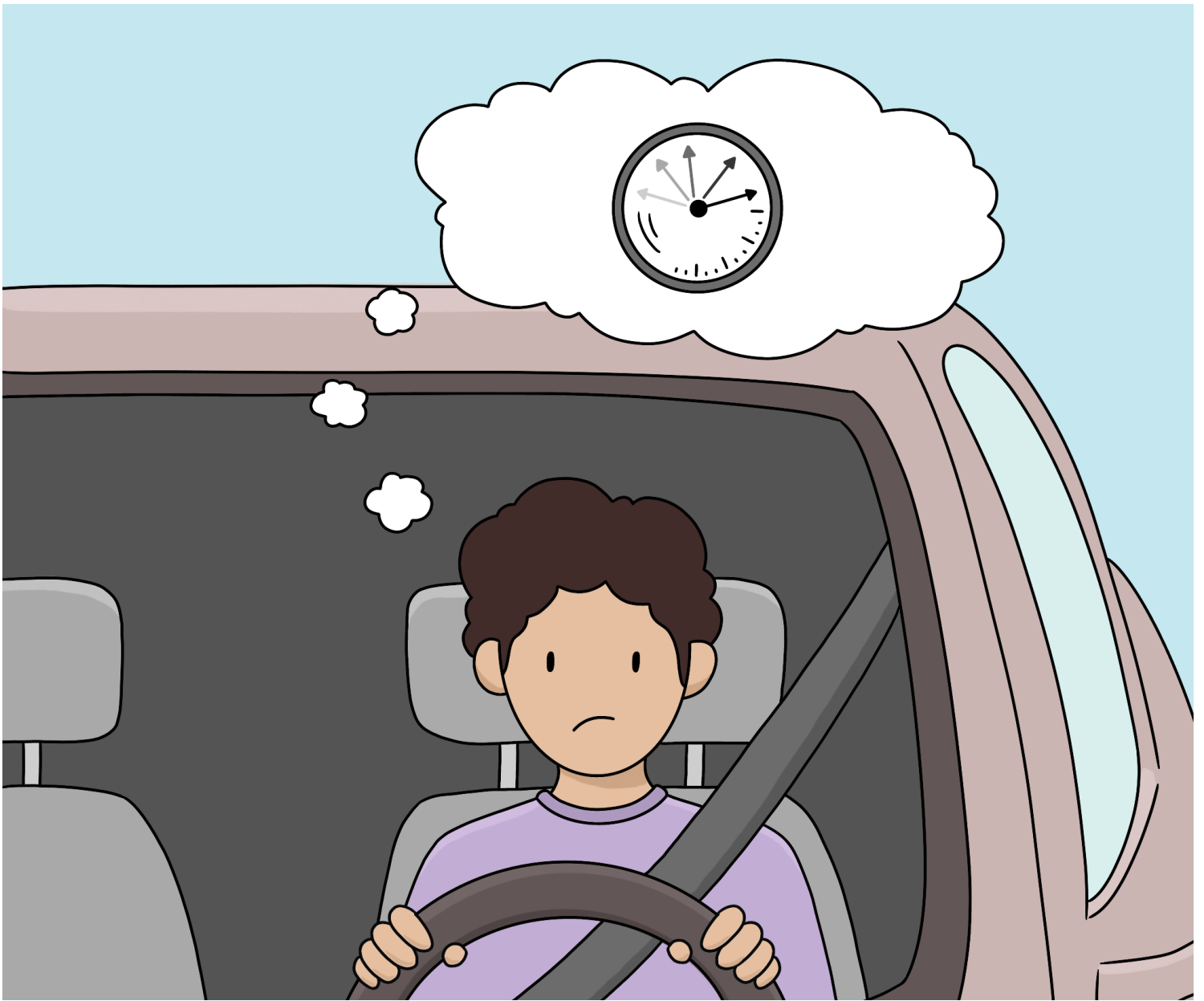
Kyle then comes to a complete stop in a safe area and puts his car in 'park.'

Kyle rolls his window down enough so that he can communicate with the officer and pass documents back and forth.

He then turns off the car.



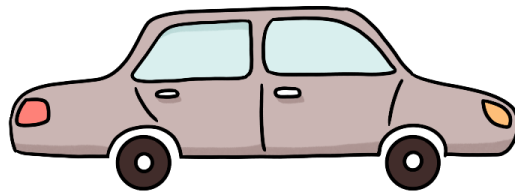
Kyle puts his hands where the officer can see them to signal that he doesn't intend to be a threat and wants to cooperate.



Kyle stays inside of the car. He knows he should stay inside of the car — unless the police officer instructs him otherwise — both for his own safety and the safety of the officer.

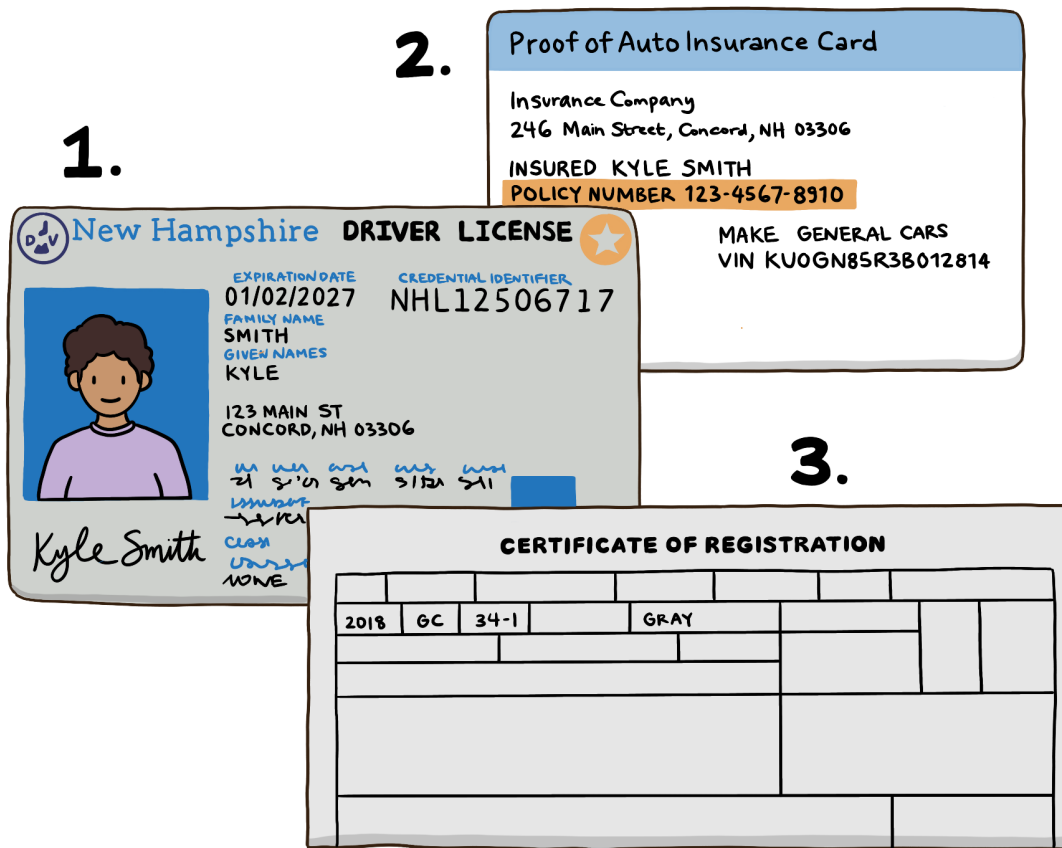
Sometimes the officer can take a while to approach the car, so Kyle waits patiently.

**PLEASE
STAY IN
YOUR CAR**



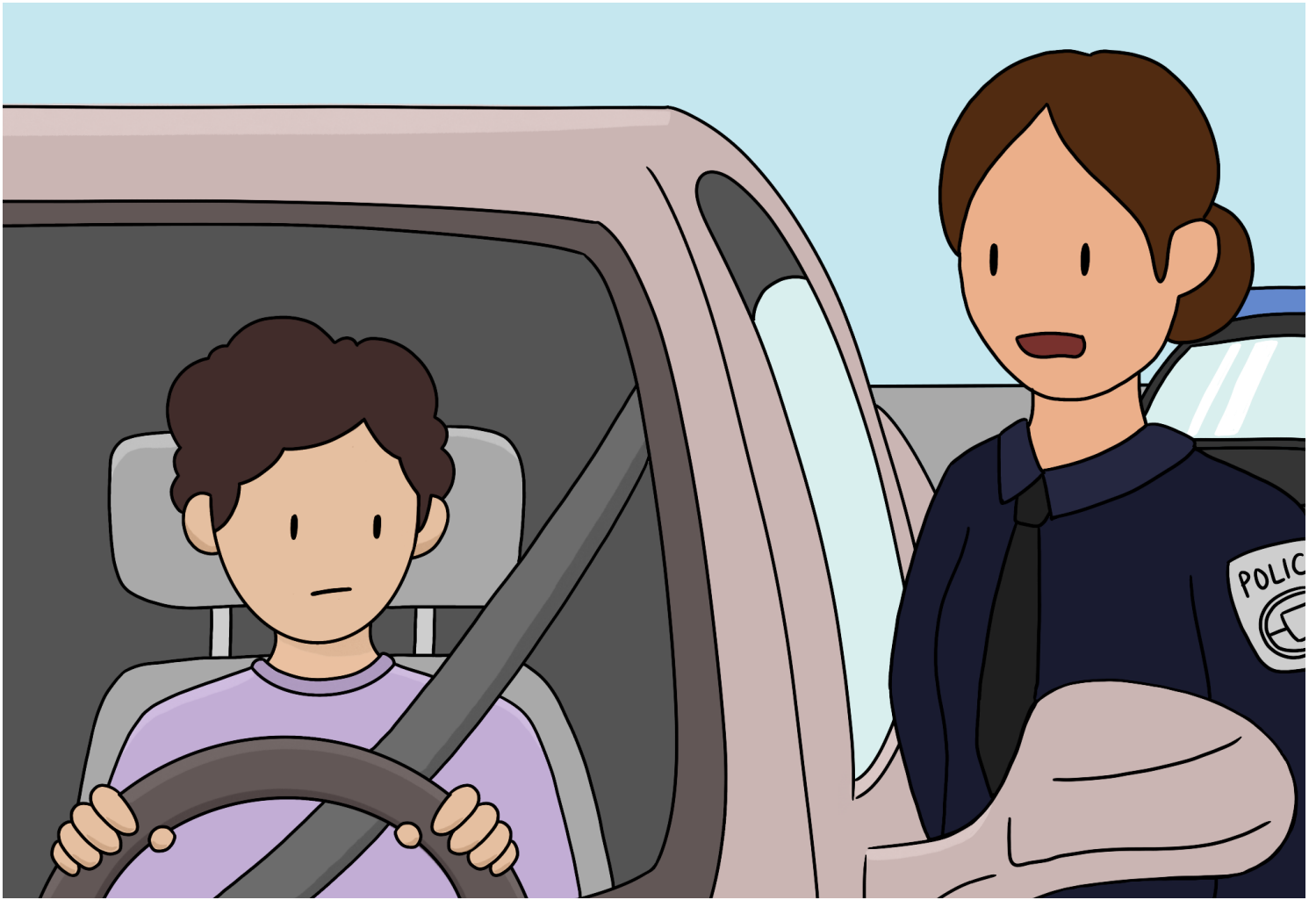
While he's waiting, Kyle thinks about getting out of the car to approach the officer but he remembers learning that this may signal a threat to the officer's safety.

Kyle waits for the officer to come to him and provide further directions.



The police officer asks Kyle for his driver's license, proof of insurance, and vehicle registration. Kyle hands them to the officer through the window.

Although it is not required, Kyle feels comfortable sharing his disability because it will help the police officer be more understanding. He explains to the officer that he is on the autism spectrum.



Kyle knows that he has the right to remain silent, although he will have to provide identification as he is the driver. He doesn't have to answer all of the officer's questions, but communicating with the officer will help the interaction go more smoothly.

He stays put until the officer tells him he can leave.



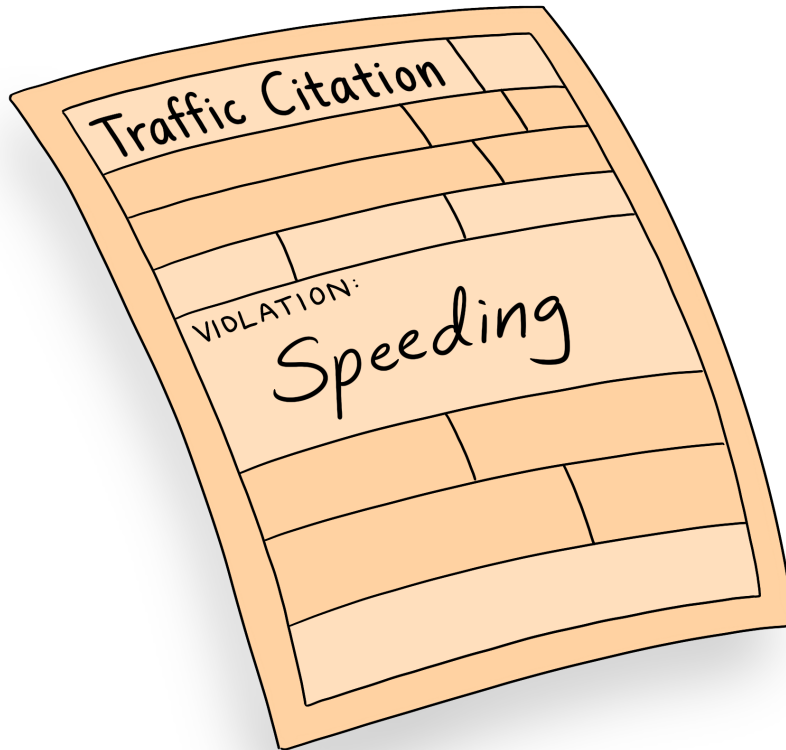
The police officer informs Kyle that she pulled him over because he was driving over the speed limit. Kyle feels a little scared and nervous, which is very common when people are pulled over. but he understands that the officer is doing her job.

Potential Outcomes

There are many different reasons that police will pull over drivers. In any interaction, it is important to remain calm and cooperative.

There are a number of potential outcomes from being pulled over. You could be issued a warning, a ticket, or the stop could lead to an arrest; which could result in a suspension of your license, depending on the violation you were arrested and convicted of.

SPEEDING



If you are pulled over for driving above the speed limit, the officer may issue you a speeding ticket. This typically is given to you while you are pulled over, but it may also be sent via mail. There is usually a fine and you can decide whether to pay the fine or go to the court and contest the ticket.

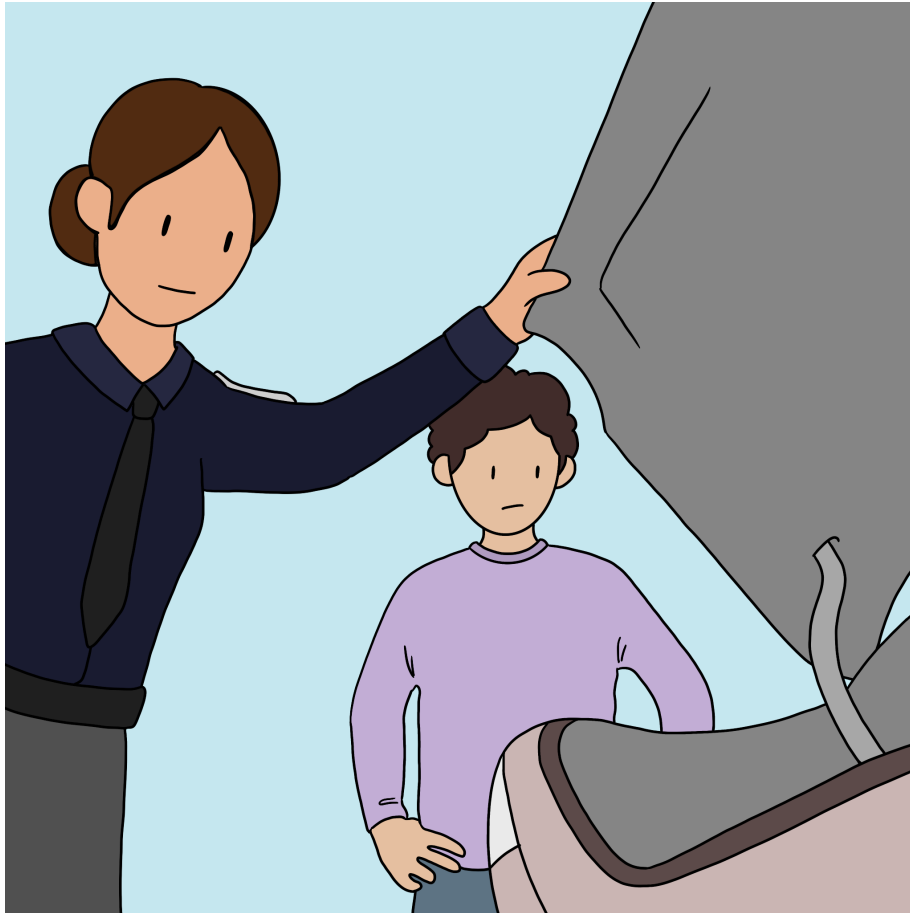
BREATHALYZER TESTS



One reason you may be pulled over is if the officer suspects you are driving under the influence. If this happens, you may be asked to step out of the car and perform a series of standardized field sobriety tests that consists of tasks that are designed to assess your balance, coordination, and multitasking ability.

If they have reason to suspect you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, you may be arrested and later asked to take a breathalyzer or blood test. Depending on the results of these tests, your license could be suspended, but this varies greatly on a case by case basis.

VEHICLE SEARCH



While this doesn't happen often, a police officer may have reason to believe that you are hiding contraband inside of your car. If this happens, they may ask for your consent to search your car.

As the driver of the car, it is your right to refuse this, but if the officer can demonstrate probable cause in a search warrant to a judge, they may be given the legal authority to search your vehicle.

Dedicated to all the individuals, family members, and first responders that shared their experiences for this project - we couldn't have done it without you!

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