



## FOR YOURSELF

### DIY: Making Social Media Work for You

You know yourself best. Here are some simple ways to change your social media experience.

#### Use social media mindfully

Make the choice to engage with the content, accounts and people that make you **feel good and inspire you**

#### Don't compare yourself to others

What you see online **isn't necessarily reality or the full story** (it's often just good photo editing!)

#### Just keep scrolling

Scrolling past a triggering post can help. Don't stay on a post if it doesn't serve you – remind yourself to just **keep scrolling!**

#### Reach out

Instagram can be a great way to connect to others with similar experiences, especially those you might not know. Even if you are not ready to share your mental health story, consider using social media to **reach out to someone for support**. #mentalhealthadvocate can be a great place to start

#### Pay attention to screen time

The world exists beyond a screen – moderation is key and IRL experiences matter

**DIY** The Instagram **Your Activity** feature within your profile can help you manage time on the app by setting a **daily reminder** to **log off**

Most smartphones have built-in timers that let you **set time limits** within individual apps (Screen Time for iOS, Digital Wellbeing for Android)

#### Control who you follow

You can **unfollow**, **mute** or **block** people who aren't supporting your wellness; users will not be notified if you do so

**DIY** Each post you see in your Instagram feed has three dots in the top right; tap the dots and select **Mute or Unfollow**  
To completely block a user, tap into their profile and use the three dot menu on the top right of their page and select **Block**

#### Avoid your triggers

Use built-in Instagram features like **Comment Filtering** to keep your experience healthy

**DIY** In your Instagram profile tap on the menu in the top right; tap **Settings** at the bottom, tap **Privacy**, tap **Comments** and activate the **Manual Filter** tool, where you can enter keywords or terms that are triggering. Comments containing these words will be hidden from your view  
You can also control who is able to comment on your content. Within the **Comments** section, tap **Block Comments From** and add the accounts you prefer not to engage with

#### Share your mental health story

For some, it can help to be vocal about your mental health experience. The choice to share your story is yours – there is no right or wrong decision. Know that if you do choose to share your story, there are people who will listen

**DIY** Check out [these tips](#) on how to share your story safely and effectively

Social media platforms like Instagram can bring us together yet they can also leave us feeling alone or like we don't fit in. They connect us to new resources but can also reinforce negative stereotypes and beliefs. Social media is complicated but we have the power to make the experience healthier for ourselves and for each other.

**Here's how.**

Remember, don't be afraid to speak up for yourself and reach out for help when you need it. Visit [BeVocalSpeakUp.com](https://BeVocalSpeakUp.com) to learn more.

**Direct others to resources**

@crisistextline (crisis)  
@800273talk (crisis)

@afspnational  
@dbsalliance

@jedfoundation  
@mentalhealthamerica

@namicomunicate  
@nationalcouncil



## FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

You can play a role in shaping a **healthier online environment for all of us.**

### DIY: Helping Social Media Work for Everyone

#### Think before you post

You never know what someone is going through. **Stop and think about the effect** your next post, story or comment might have on others

#### Be inclusive

Learn how to make social media content more **accessible to everyone**; check out this [free training](#)

#### Keep it real

Don't be afraid to show that life isn't picture-perfect – **there is power in authenticity**. By being open about your experiences, you are sending a message that sometimes it's ok to not be ok. You never know who you could help by speaking up and getting "real," and it could help increase others' understanding of mental health

#### Lift others up

Small acts of kindness online can go a long way. Tagging a friend in a **thoughtful or funny post** can be a good way to lift spirits and an opportunity to check in

#### Use language and images thoughtfully

Words and pictures are powerful. When posting or commenting, use non-judgmental, "people-first language" and imagery that doesn't **sugarcoat, romanticize** or **minimize** the mental health experience

**DIY** Take a look at these [Be Vocal tips](#) for guidance

#### Send positive vibes

Share content that starts a conversation or **inspires healthy behaviors**

**DIY** Engage with existing communities promoting positive conversations: #KindComments, #HereForYou, #PerfectlyMe, #RealConvo, #SeizeTheAwkward, #MentalHealthMatters, #MentalIllnessFeelsLike, #MentalIllnessRecovery

#### Take action

Use Instagram's built-in safety and reporting features when you think someone may be in need, or if you see something that doesn't align with the platform's [community guidelines](#)

**DIY** To report a post you believe is harmful, tap on the menu in the top right for the **Report** feature; from here, you can flag a post as **spam** or **inappropriate**. You can report a comment you think is intended to bully or harass. Tap **View all Comments** under a post; swipe left and tap on the exclamation point symbol; you can then report the comment as **spam** or **scam** or **abusive content**

Remember, don't be afraid to speak up for yourself and reach out for help when you need it. Visit [BeVocalSpeakUp.com](https://BeVocalSpeakUp.com) to learn more.

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# WHEN YOU THINK SOMEONE MIGHT BE IN NEED

When it comes to social media, it may be difficult to know if someone is struggling or just exaggerating how they're feeling. But in a situation where someone is expressing that they are in need or at risk of self-harm, you should always take them seriously. **Here are some ways that you may be able to help.**

## Assess the situation

Look out for behavior, language or imagery that might indicate someone is at risk of self-harm

- Common phrases of concern: "I want to give up," "No one would miss me if I was gone," "I hate myself," or "I'm worthless"
- Concerning emojis or hashtags: **#depressed** **#sad** **#givingup** **#cutting** **#whenimgone** **#lonely**



## Pay attention to your friends on social media

Warning signs may include engaging with accounts that promote or discuss self-harm, or a sudden change in behavior (e.g., noticeable absence or uncharacteristic pattern of posting)

## Consider reaching out

If you know the person who may need help, consider reaching out

## Escalate appropriately

Connect them to resources or hotlines they can readily access

## If you see someone in need, remember it is important to:

- Listen and provide a safe place for them to share without judgement
- Let them know they are supported and not alone
- Continue to follow up, be empowered to reach out
- If you don't feel comfortable contacting them directly, reach out to someone you both know that might be able to offer support
- "How are you? I saw your post and was concerned when you said \_\_\_\_\_."
- "You are not alone. I'm here for you."
- "I understand you may not want to talk to me, but it is important you talk to someone."
- **Call 911:** If someone you know has made an explicit threat of suicide, including posts that indicate urgent emotional despair, saying goodbyes, glorifying death or expressing wanting to die, immediately call 911 or emergency services; communicate your concern and calmly provide background of the current situation
- **Report the concerning post:** If you see that someone might be at risk through posts, immediately report it to the platform
  - » On Instagram, you can tap the menu on the top right side of a post and tap **Report**; then select **It's inappropriate** > **Self injury**
  - » Instagram will reach out to this person with support

# RESOURCES & HOTLINES READILY ACCESSIBLE

## National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to speak with a trained counselor available at any time

## Crisis Text Line

Text 741-741 and a live, trained counselor will respond within minutes to any type of crisis

## Crisis Chat

Visit [crisischat.org](http://crisischat.org) to chat online with specialists ready to listen and support

## Warmlines

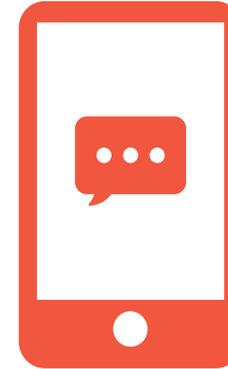
You can see if there is a warmline near you by checking [warmline.org](http://warmline.org). Warmlines are run by individuals with lived experience who can provide a compassionate listening ear, even if someone is not in crisis

## The Trevor Project

Visit [thetrevorproject.org](http://thetrevorproject.org) for suicide prevention information and live chat/text specifically tailored to the young LGBTQ community and their allies, or call 1-866-488-7386

## Screening-to-Supports (S2S)

[MHAscreening.org](http://MHAscreening.org) will bring you to 10 professionally-validated mental health screenings that are free, confidential, and secure. Results of your screening will direct you to tailored resources



If you or someone you know is in crisis or having serious thoughts of suicide, call 911, contact your health care professional right away or go to the emergency room. You can also call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 24 hours a day at 1-800-273-8255.

You can text the Crisis Text Line at 741-741 to reach a live, trained crisis counselor.

**Be Vocal: Speak Up for Mental Health is an initiative encouraging people across America to use their voice in support of mental health.**

*Be Vocal* is a partnership between six leading mental health advocacy organizations – American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, The Jed Foundation, Mental Health America, the National Alliance on Mental Illness and the National Council for Behavioral Health – and Sunovion Pharmaceuticals Inc.

This tip sheet is part of a larger effort to help people be vocal for themselves and others – made by and for the mental health community.

