Reporting Social Media Content that Promotes Suicide or Self-harm

Connecting for Life

Introduction

Most of the time, the internet is a great place where we can connect with others and widely share positive messages or information. But sometimes, **social media posts**, **videos**, **pictures** and **articles** can be damaging when they show or promote suicide.

Harmful information about suicide can be readily accessible online, but social media platforms such as **Facebook**, **Instagram**, **Twitter**, **Periscope** and **YouTube** all recognise the hurt that content like this can cause, and do not allow pro-suicide content on their platforms.

Always be mindful of others

Before you share any information on social media, **take some time to think about how other people might be affected by it**. Sometimes we quickly share content on social media without thinking about the consequences. You could potentially share material that is unsafe or harmful for others, without even realising it.

Suicide and self-harm are sensitive issues, so try not to trivialise the topics or make them seem less complex than they are. **Remember that other people who use social media may already be vulnerable or upset.** They could also be grieving or recently bereaved. Be aware that everyone is entitled to privacy, including a person who has died.

When social media content is detailed, exaggerates or sensationalises suicide or self-harm, it could be particularly upsetting for others. If the content perpetuates myths or misperceptions about suicide or self-harm, or presents it in an appealing, positive or glorified manner, it could be equally dangerous.

Reporting social media content

If you come across a post, video, picture, article or link to a website that promotes suicide or self-harm, **you should report it to the platform directly.** This is the best and quickest way of having it removed.

Reporting potentially harmful content like this is very important. For example, we know that the more access people have to information on the methods of suicide, the more likely it is for them to carry it out. This kind of information makes people vulnerable by validating any suicidal feelings they might be having, and it also shows suicide as a legitimate course of action.

Viewing content that promotes suicide or self-harm does not always lead to action, but studies have shown that **many people who have attempted suicide in the past, reported viewing some kind of pro-suicide content at some point in their lives**. Furthermore, posts that promote suicide can equally be upsetting or harmful for those people who have lost someone close to suicide.

Some examples of content that promotes suicide or self-harm

→ Images or photographs of a suicide or self-harm incident, including its location

→ Other detailed descriptions of suicide or self-harm

→ Explanation or description of methods of suicide or self-harm

→ Information on how a person could access means to suicide

→ Detail of plans of suicide (e.g., how, where, when)

→ Suicide notes

→ Live streams of suicide or self-harm incidents

→ Assertions that suicide is a desirable outcome

→ Information on suicide pacts or partners

→ Any other content that encourages people to end their life, especially when they are already vulnerable.

Remember that this content could be original, or shared from additional sources, such as the media, film or television.

How social media platforms help

All the major social media platforms have **Help or Safety Centres accessible to users**, which explain how dangerous or harmful content, such as pro-suicide content, should be reported to them. They use a variety of tools to flag or escalate this content to reporting teams, and remove content when appropriate. Some platforms also proactively promote help-seeking or support information in response to pro-suicide content or activity on their platforms.

Any user of social media should familiarise themselves with the platforms Safety Centre and their polices, so that they can report any harmful or dangerous content in the most effective way possible.

Always remember

Any indication that someone is about to harm themselves, should be taken seriously. If you are concerned about someone's immediate safety because of a post, image or other content they have shared;

→ Report the content to the Gardaí or Emergency Services, giving as much information about the situation as you can

→ Report the content to the social media platform

→ Seek professional advice from a health professional or support organisation.

If you know the person, or if you are in the position to, you could also;

→ Talk with them directly, either on or offline, before posting your concerns publicly

→ Connect with the person's family or others who might be able to check on them.

If you don't believe the person is at immediate risk of suicide, but they still need support;

→ Engage with them to see how they are and offer messages of encouragement and support

→ Ask how you can help, or if they know where else they can find help

→ Offer information on where they could find supports or services

→ Follow up with them, in time, to check they are safe and can remain safe

→ Always stay respectful of the person and where they are at

→ Seek professional advice from a health professional or support organisation. Some of these are listed at the end of this booklet.

HOW TO REPORT SUICIDE CONTENT TO ONLINE PLATFORMS

If the person is known to you and it is an emergency please **call 112 or 999**.

FACEBOOK

Policy: Prohibits content that promotes or encourages suicide or any other type of self-injury, including self-mutilation and eating disorders.

View policy: https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards#self-injury

Find more information in the **Facebook Help Centre > Privacy & Safety > Staying Safe > Suicide & Self Injury Resources**

How to Report:

A POST:
1. Click ⌄ in the top right of the post.
2. Click Report post or Report photo.
3. Select the option that best describes the issue and follow the on-screen instructions.

A PHOTO OR VIDEO:
1. Click on the photo or video to expand it.
2. Hover over the photo or video and click Options in the bottom-right corner
3. Click Report Photo for photos or Report Video for videos.
4. Select the option that best describes the issue and follow the on-screen instructions.

If you're having trouble reporting something, please log in from a computer and use the report links.

A PAGE:
1. Go to the Page you want to report.
2. Click ••• below the Page's cover photo.
3. Select Report Page.
4. Select the option that best describes the issue and follow the on-screen instructions.

If you can't access the Page you want to report, consider asking a friend to report it.

INSTAGRAM

Policy: Encouraging or urging people to embrace self-injury is counter to Instagram's environment of support, and they will remove it or disable accounts if it's reported to them. They may also remove content identifying victims or survivors of self-injury if the content targets them for attack or humour.

Find more information in the **Instagram > Help Centre > Privacy & Safety > Report something > Self-Injury**

How to Report:

HOW TO REPORT A POST FOR SUICIDE OR SELF-INJURY:

1. Tap ••• above the post.
2. Tap Report.
3. Select the option that best describes the issue and follow the on-screen instructions.

If you don't have an Instagram account, you can report content using a form which you can find at **https://help.instagram.com/**

TWITTER

How to Report:

If you see Tweets indicating that someone might harm himself or herself, you can let Twitter know by filing a report. You need a Twitter account to do this:
https://help.twitter.com/forms/suicide

Twitter may then take a number of steps to assist the person, such as reaching out to that person and providing resources such as contact information their mental health partners.

TO REPORT A TWEET:
1. Navigate to the Tweet you'd like to report
2. Click or tap the ∨ icon
3. Select Report
4. Select the option that best describes the issue and follow the on-screen instructions.

TO REPORT AN ACCOUNT:
1. Go to the account profile and click or tap the gear icon, or tap the overflow icon
2. Select Report
3. Select the option that best describes the issue and follow the on-screen instructions.

PERISCOPE

How to Report:

TO REPORT A BROADCAST:

1. Navigate to the broadcast you'd like to report
2. On iOS or Android, select the three dot symbol ••• next to the comment field and tap the 'Report Broadcast' button.
3. Select a reason for the report - Self-Harm
4. Select the option that best describes the issue and follow the on-screen instructions.
5. On web, select the 'i' icon next to the comment field to reveal the broadcast title
6. Click the exclamation point icon next to the title.
7. This will instantaneously alert the Periscope team of the sensitive content.

If you see a user posting abusive or offensive comments in a broadcast you can select the comment and tap 'Report Comment'.

YOUTUBE

Policy: While it might not seem fair to say you can't show something because of what viewers might do in response, YouTube draw the line at content that intends to incite violence or encourage dangerous or illegal activities that have an inherent risk of serious physical harm or death.

View YouTube policies on harmful or dangerous content: **https://support.google.com/youtube/**

Find more information in the **YouTube Help Centre > Privacy & Safety Centre > Suicide & Self Injury**

If you come across content in which someone is suicidal or engaging in self harm, please contact local authorities and flag the video to bring it to YouTube's immediate attention. YouTube will reach out to these individuals with resources and work with suicide prevention agencies to provide assistance when possible.

How to Report:

1. Sign in to YouTube.
2. Below the player for the video you want to report, click More.
   a. On mobile, click ••• in top right
3. In the drop-down menu, choose Report.
4. Select the option that best describes the issue and follow the on-screen instructions.

TUMBLR

How to Report:

PROMOTION OR GLORIFICATION OF SELF-HARM:

Tumblr asks that users "Don't post content that actively promotes or glorifies self-harm. This includes content that urges or encourages others to: cut or injure themselves; embrace anorexia, bulimia, or other eating disorders; or commit suicide rather than, e.g., seeking counseling or treatment, or joining together in supportive conversation with those suffering or recovering from depression or other conditions. Dialogue about these behaviors is incredibly important and online communities can be extraordinarily helpful to people struggling with these difficult conditions. We aim for Tumblr to be a place that facilitates awareness, support and recovery, and we will remove only those posts or blogs that cross the line into active promotion or glorification of self-harm."

More information and support

SAMARITANS
24 hour support every day.

Freephone 116 123

email jo@samaritans.ie

www.samaritans.ie

PIETA HOUSE
Free services and supports for people who are in suicidal distress and those who engage in self-harm.

Freephone 1800 247 247

email mary@pieta.ie

or text HELP to 51444

(standard message rates apply)

www.pieta.ie

HEADLINE
Ireland's national programme for responsible reporting, and representation of suicide and mental health.

www.headline.ie

WEBWISE
Information, advice and free education resources addressing a range of internet safety issues and concerns.

www.webwise.ie

BE SAFE ONLINE

The Government's campaign to highlight ways to help you stay safe online. The site provides access to a wide range of Online Safety resources, to support online safety for all.

www.gov.ie/ encampaigns/be-safe- online/

SPUNOUT.IE

Online Safety Hub – A range of easy guides to online privacy, safety, and security across all types of platforms and services.

www.spunout.ie/ onlinesafety

your mental health.ie

Information | Support | Services

Visit **www.yourmentalhealth.ie**
for information and support services
for your mental health and wellbeing.

This booklet is available to order on
www.healthpromotion.ie and has been produced by;

The National Office for Suicide Prevention
HSE Community Strategy and Planning
Stewarts Hospital, Palmerstown, Dublin 20
Tel: 01 620 1670
E: info@nosp.ie

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Níos Fearr
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