

#chatsafe for parents and carers

how parents and carers can support safe online
communication about suicide



© Orygen This publication is copyright. Apart from use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968 and subsequent amendments, no part may be reproduced, stored or transmitted by any means without prior written permission of Orygen.

Suggested citation: La Sala, L., Cooper, C., Lamblin, M., Bellairs-Walsh, I., Thorn, P., & Robinson, J. #chatsafe for parents and carers. Melbourne: Orygen. 2021.

Disclaimer: This information is not medical advice. It is generic and does not take into account your personal circumstances, physical wellbeing, mental status or mental requirements. Do not use this information to treat or diagnose your own or another person's medical condition and never ignore medical advice or delay seeking it because of something in this information. Any medical questions should be referred to a qualified healthcare professional. If in doubt, please always seek medical advice.

Orygen

Locked Bag 10
Parkville, Vic, 3052
Australia

www.orygen.org.au/chatsafe

Orygen acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands we are on and pays respect to their Elders past and present. Orygen recognises and respects their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationships to their Country, which continue to be important to First Nations people living today.

#chatsafe for parents and carers

how parents and carers can support safe online
communication about suicide



What is #chatsafe?

Many countries, including Australia, have developed media guidelines for safe reporting of suicide. These guidelines target media professionals and have been largely focused on traditional news and print media forms, rather than the internet and social media. However, we know that young people increasingly use social media platforms to discuss suicide in a number of ways. Strategies focused on involvement of professionals and on traditional forms of media are therefore less likely to be helpful for young people.

To address this, we created the #chatsafe guidelines (1). The #chatsafe guidelines are the world's first set of evidence-informed tools and tips designed to support young people to communicate safely online about suicide. They were developed in partnership with young people, media and suicide prevention professionals and are supported by a social media campaign which was entirely co-designed with over 200 young people from across Australia (2).

The #chatsafe guidelines include the following sections:

- what to consider before you post anything about suicide;
- sharing your own thoughts, feelings or experience with suicidal behaviour online;
- communicating about someone you know who is affected by suicidal thoughts, feelings or behaviours;
- responding to someone who may be suicidal; and
- how to create safe online memorials or pages.

Findings from an evaluation of the social media campaign told us that young people not only liked the social media content, but they found it increased their confidence and safety when communicating online about suicide (3). These findings suggest that young people find it helpful to find information on social media about suicide prevention. It also means that social media presents an acceptable way of reaching young people with information about their mental health and suicide.

While the social media campaign is doing a great job of reaching young people with #chatsafe information, we know that many adults are worried about the type of content their young people might come across on social media. For that reason, #chatsafe also includes resources that equip adults with the tools and tips they need to support young people to communicate safely online about suicide. All #chatsafe resources that have been developed for young people and adults are available on the [#chatsafe website](#).

You can download the #chatsafe guidelines from the [#chatsafe website](#), or visit the social media campaign on [Instagram](#). You can also find the #chatsafe guidelines in the [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) safety centres (4).

Introduction to #chatsafe for parents and carers

Parents and carers are often some of the most trusted adults in the lives of young people; they are also an important source of information and support (5). For this reason, it is important that parents and carers feel equipped to discuss sensitive and complex topics, such as suicide, with their young person.

Not only is the topic of suicide an important one to discuss, so too is the topic of social media, including the type of content that young people see and share online. We know that talking to young people about this can be tough. We also know that when you add mental health and suicide topics to those conversations, it can feel overwhelming, and it can be difficult to know where to start or how to begin that conversation. That is where this resource will help.

We have created #chatsafe for parents and carers to help the significant adults in a young person's life feel more confident and better equipped to support their young person to communicate safely online about suicide. This resource will provide information on how you can model safe language when talking about suicide, support your young person to communicate safely online about suicide, and help them make decisions about how they could engage with suicide-related content on social media. Open conversations and early intervention are key to providing support to young people, especially when they are struggling with thoughts of suicide or coming across information about suicide that they might find distressing. By increasing your own knowledge and confidence to communicate about suicide safely, you will be encouraging your young person to do the same – both online and offline.

The first part of this resource shares some information about the importance of talking to young people about suicide in general. The second part is designed to help you support your young person to communicate safely online about suicide.



#chatsafe



Information in this resource is generic and is not intended to replace any medical advice provided by a clinician (or similar). The #chatsafe content has been developed and evaluated with those aged 16-25 years, and we encourage a consideration of age when having conversations with young people about suicide.

"As young people, we are inevitably going to be affected by suicide and self-harm. As parents and carers, you can be a key source of support and create safe spaces for us to talk. These guidelines can equip you with the skills, knowledge, and resources to proactively support us communicating online. Talking about suicide and self-harm isn't easy, but it is a conversation that can save lives."

Emily, youth advisor

"As young people, we want our support network to be well equipped with the understanding, skills and resources so that they can support us. I feel more comfortable seeking help from those around me with the knowledge that they're being supported too."

Ella, youth advisor

It is safe, and important, to talk to your young person about suicide

Parents and carers can play an important role in helping young people understand their mental health and experiences of suicide. They can also play a key role in facilitating help-seeking if or when they need it. However, many parents and carers feel ill-equipped to talk to their young person about topics such as mental health, self-harm and suicide (6).

Talking about suicide can be uncomfortable

Talking to young people about suicide can feel uncomfortable and daunting. Many adults are often worried about talking to a young person about suicide, due to the common misconception that talking about suicide could give them ideas or contribute to the development of suicidal thoughts. Our research tells us that this is not the case. The findings show that it can be safe to talk to a young person about suicide if you are worried about them or if a suicide has occurred within your community (7, 8, 9). In fact, young people have told the #chatsafe team that they want their parents to listen to them and openly communicate about suicide.

“Put yourselves in our shoes and think about how you would like someone to communicate, or show you that they are there for you. Don’t wait for the problem to happen. Start building that relationship now where you do have continuous conversations to avoid anything scary happening in the future.”

Young person



What are experiences of suicide?


When we say “experiences of suicide”, we are referring to any time someone has an experience with suicide, either personally, or through someone else. It can include a young person who has had their own experiences of suicidal thoughts, feelings or behaviour, or those who have come into contact with other people who have experienced suicidal thoughts, feelings or behaviour. These experiences can happen both online or offline.

When might a parent talk to their young person about suicide?

There are a number of things that might prompt you as a parent to talk to your young person about suicide. Some of these might include:

- you are worried about them and their safety;
- you are worried about one of their friends or someone they know;
- a suicide has occurred in your local community or at your child's school;
- a public figure or celebrity has died by suicide and is being discussed in the media;
- information about suicide or self-harm is circulating or being shared on social media;
- a school text covers the topic of suicide; or
- a TV show or movie they watched mentioned suicide or a character dies by suicide.

When these things happen, it is important that you feel comfortable and confident to communicate about suicide with your young person. Not talking about suicide, or ignoring information about suicide, further stigmatises the topic and suggests to young people that they also should not talk about suicide (10). This can prevent help-seeking and early intervention, and limits the opportunity to engage in helpful and safe conversations with young people about mental health and suicide.

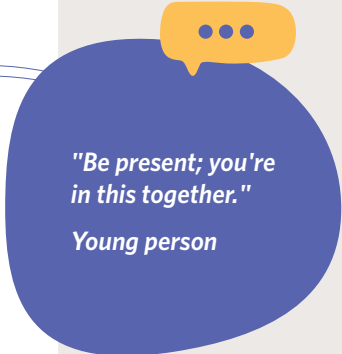


"In a digital world, things can look a certain way one day and be completely different another day, or even another hour. Social media is such an entrenched component of our lives, it is an extension of us really... It's super important that parents don't get upset at their children for coming across certain things [online]. As a young person, I know I have been apprehensive to talk to my parents about something I saw on social media because of what their response might be. I think it's really important that both parents and their children learn how to navigate conversations around concepts that they may think is daunting."

Young person



Here are some things you can do when talking to a young person about the topic of suicide:




"Be present; you're in this together."

Young person

- **Be calm and consider the things you would like to say first.** It might help to write down your thoughts, feelings and things you would like to get across before starting the conversation.
- **Be honest.** It is okay to tell the young person that the conversation feels awkward or uncomfortable. They may also feel that way and this models that it is safe to be vulnerable and honest. There is a reason why you would like to start this conversation, so be honest about what that reason is.
- **Be direct and clear in your language.** Avoid using vague language that might make it difficult for your young person to understand what you are trying to say.
- **Give them time to express themselves in a non-judgmental environment.** Ask them how they are feeling and if there is anything they would like to get off their chest. Remember, they might not be ready to talk right away, but if you decide to park the conversation, let them know you will come back to it when they feel up to it. Let them know you will be ready to listen when they are ready to talk.
- **Try not to be reactive or panic.** Your young person might say something that makes you worry or feel concerned. Try to sit in that moment with them and show them that you are there for them and that you are willing to listen. Remember that it is also okay if you feel stuck and do not know what to do.
- **You do not need to have a solution.** Young people have told the #chatsafe team that sometimes it helps just to talk to an adult who simply listens without judgment. Often, young people might not need an answer to their problems in order to feel some relief. Simply having an adult listening to them, showing they care and not jumping to solutions can be really helpful.
- **Provide information.** Let them know about support services and resources that can help (see section: [support services and extra resources](#), on page 21).
- **Make a plan together about what you will do next, if it is appropriate.** Remember you can speak to support services yourself for advice about how to best support your young person.
- **If you are worried about your young person, ask them directly if they are thinking about suicide.** If you are concerned that they might be experiencing suicidal thoughts or feelings, it is important to ask them in a clear and upfront way (see section: [It is okay to ask someone if they are thinking about suicide](#), on page 14).
- **Leave the conversation in a supportive way.** Let your young person know that you appreciate them sharing their feelings, or that you will be there to listen when they feel ready to share. Validate their experience by reminding them that it is courageous to talk about difficult feelings. It is also a good idea to agree to a time to check in with each other again, and let them know that you are there for them when they need it.

Providing a safe space

All of these tips can help create a safe space for your young person to share. When you communicate openly with your young person about suicide, you are providing a safe space for them to share their thoughts and feelings with you. You are also showing them that they can come to you if they are worried about themselves, or someone else. Opening up these lines of communication is a really valuable way of providing support to young people and can go a long way in keeping them safe.



"Be active listeners. Support us. Listen with your heart. When you're having these conversations, be aware of your body language, your facial expressions, how you're communicating with us. It all creates that safe environment where we feel comfortable to talk about these things."

Young person

Mythbusters about suicide

It is important to acknowledge and challenge some common myths and misconceptions about suicide and suicidal thoughts and behaviours in young people. For some of the most common myths, see the mythbusters section of the [Orygen website \(11\)](#).



Social media can be an important source of support for young people


Young Australians are spending an increasing amount of time on social media and we know that they often see platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok (and others) as safe places to talk about their thoughts, feelings and ideas. Because of this, some young people may turn to social media to communicate about suicide-related thoughts and behaviours, as well as self-harm.

It is the goal of #chatsafe to keep these communications safe, helpful and appropriate. We aim to empower young people with the information and tools that they need to have these conversations safely, and we see social media as an important context to provide help and support.

Young people have told us that social media:

- allows them to build a sense of community and social connection;
- provides an accessible and appropriate way to seek help and find information; and
- is a platform for them to discuss their feelings in a non-stigmatised way.

That being said, we know that exposure to suicide-related material online can also pose a risk to young people, and that is especially the case if information is shared in an unsafe or unhelpful way. For instance, certain types of content (e.g. graphic information or images) may cause distress or lead to imitative suicidal behaviour (12). However, research has shown a reduction in suicide rates when information about suicide in mainstream media is shared responsibly and sensitively. For this reason, the #chatsafe guidelines were created to help young people have these conversations safely online and to encourage them to share information responsibly and sensitively.



"The first time I was exposed to suicide, it was [on] social media. That was my first time. Because unfortunately a few years ago, a student died by suicide... Obviously parents were concerned that there was all this talk going around about suicide, but I think it's really important to know that after that, although it was extremely unfortunate, there was just this outwards support from young people who were sharing posts and supporting one another. They were saying it's okay to not be okay, if you're struggling, please don't be afraid to reach out. That's why I think something like #chatsafe is really important."

Young person

"The online world is rapidly changing, together with smart devices. It's very hard for parents to see what's happening and to fully understand what's going on in the online world for youth. It's difficult to navigate, even with the best of intentions. It's a struggle at times."

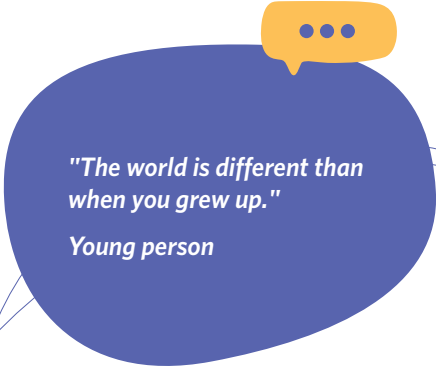
Parent of young people

What does safe online communication about suicide look like?

Safe communication about suicide is key to #chatsafe. "Safe communication" refers to the language young people use, the type of information they share online and the support young people can provide to each other. It's helpful for the trusted adults in a young person's life to be able to differentiate between safe and unsafe communication, and model safe communication themselves - both online and offline. This is because the language we use can contribute to either challenging or reinforcing harmful stigma (13). Unsafe language can also unintentionally send the message to someone that we are not a safe person to speak to about suicidal thoughts. It is important that adults model language which opens up conversation and invites young people to reach out if they are feeling unsafe.

Language matters

#chatsafe encourages parents and carers to model safe language when speaking to their young person about suicide. It is also a good idea for parents and carers to help their young person understand the importance of safe communication and to encourage them to use safe language when communicating with their peers about suicide. Parents and carers might wish to direct their young person to the [language and safety tips](#) on the #chatsafe website.



"The world is different than when you grew up."

Young person

Language matters



Helpful language:

- Try to say a person “died by suicide”, or “took their own life”.
- Indicate that suicide is complex and that many factors contribute to a person ending their life.
- Include messages of [hope and recovery](#).
- Tell others who might be thinking about suicide where and how they could seek professional help (see section: [support services and extra resources](#), on page 21).
- Include information on factors that protect against suicide (e.g. engaging in meaningful activities and building and maintaining connections and relationships).
- Indicate that suicide is preventable, professional help is available, and recovery is possible.
- Encourage young people to talk about how they are feeling – that might be to yourself, a friend, another trusted adult or a professional.

Unhelpful language:

- Avoid using words that describe suicide as criminal or sinful. For example, say died by suicide rather than committed suicide. Saying that a person committed suicide may suggest to someone that what they are feeling is wrong or unacceptable or make someone worry that they’ll be judged if they ask for help.
- Avoid saying that suicide is a ‘solution’ to problems, life stressors or mental health difficulties.
- Avoid using words that glamourise, romanticise or make suicide seem appealing.
- Avoid using words that trivialise or make suicide seem less complex than it is.
- Avoid blaming one event or implying that the suicide was the result of a single cause, such as bullying or social media use.
- Avoid using judgmental phrases which reinforce myths, stigma, stereotypes or suggest nothing can be done about suicide.
- Avoid providing detailed information about the actual suicide or suicide attempt.
- Avoid providing information about suicide methods or the location of the suicide. Don’t acknowledge if there have been a number of suicide acts at a particular location or ‘hot spot’.

While conversations about suicide cannot, or should not, be stopped, it is important that stories of hope, recovery and help-seeking are at the forefront of these discussions. By encouraging your young person to talk about their feelings with someone they trust, focusing on suicide being complex and preventable, and reiterating that help is always available, you are providing them with the tools to have these conversations safely.

How your young person can safely share information about their own experience

The [#chatsafe guidelines](#) encourage young people to take some time to think about the information they might post online and why they want to share that information before they share it. Reflecting on how their post could affect themselves and other people, and whether or not there is a different way to communicate that would be safer or more helpful, are also good reminders.

If your young person is going to share suicide-related information online, it's important to remind them:

- posts can go viral and they might not be able to control who sees or shares their post;
- inaccurate, stigmatising or unsafe posts could have a negative impact on others;
- the internet is permanent: "once posted, always posted" and other users could take screenshots or show others; and
- when posting online, it's important to monitor posts regularly for unsafe or harmful comments by others.



#chatsafe



If your young person would like to post online about their own experiences of suicide, here are some questions that might be helpful to ask them:

- How will sharing your experience online make you feel? Would asking a friend or family member to read it first help?
- What do you hope to achieve by sharing your experience? Do you want to raise awareness or are you looking for support? Are there more effective ways of achieving those things?
- Do you think you would benefit from speaking to a mental health professional about your current or previous experience with suicidal thoughts, feelings or behaviours? What resources, people or friends are available to you? (see section: [support services and extra resources](#), on page 21).
- Who will see your post? For example, are you posting on a professional mental health site, an anonymous forum or a public platform?
- How might your post affect your friends, other family members and peers?
- Will people who have read your post know how to help themselves or their loved ones after reading about your experience? If not, it could be helpful to provide some suggestions about what has helped you in the past.

"It really helps if parents can take the time to familiarise themselves with social media platforms."

Young person

Supporting young people to reach out to someone that they're worried about

If your young person is concerned about someone because of something they shared online, the [#chatsafe guidelines](#) encourage them to talk to the person directly, either online or offline, if they feel comfortable to do so.

The guidelines also suggest that it would be helpful for them to inform a trusted adult (e.g. yourself, another parent/family member or a teacher) or friend and, if available, seek professional advice.

If you know that your young person is worried about someone, and they are having these conversations online, below are some things to remind them of.

Before your young person checks in on a friend

Reaching out to others online can be an important source of affirmation, connection and support for many. Make sure you inform your young person to always take any content that suggests a person may be thinking about suicide seriously, but to also make sure that they are setting boundaries about the type of support they can offer and when they can offer it.

Before reaching out, the #chatsafe guidelines encourage young people to check in with themselves first. You may wish to explore the following questions with your young person:

- How are you feeling?
- Are you able to provide support to this person?
- Do you know where to seek support or where to find more comprehensive support if it's needed?
- Will this make you feel unsafe or upset?

If the content they see is distressing or a young person does not feel comfortable responding, that's okay. Young people must recognise the limits of the support they can provide and understand that it is not their

responsibility to reach out on their own. This can feel like a big responsibility for a young person, especially if a friend or peer is messaging them privately or asking them to keep it a secret.

As a parent or carer, you can support your young person by reminding them that they can:

- come to you for help, and to inform a trusted adult such as yourself or someone else;
- seek [professional advice](#) (see section: [support services and extra resources](#), on page 21); and
- report suicidal content to the [relevant platform](#) (see section: [various safety functions of common social media platforms](#), on page 19).

It's okay to ask someone if they're thinking about suicide

When a young person decides to respond to someone they are worried about, the [#chatsafe guidelines](#) encourage them to contact that person in private and let them know that they are worried about them and care about them. The person at risk may then explain their thoughts, feelings, or experiences.

At that point, it is okay to ask someone directly: "are you thinking of suicide?" Research has shown that asking about suicidal thoughts does not increase the likelihood of a person engaging in suicidal behaviour (7,8,9). The question must be asked directly and clearly. Some suggestions of how your young person could ask the person they are worried about are:

- "Are you thinking of suicide?"
- "Do you feel suicidal?"
- "Are you thinking of ending your life?"

However, remind your young person that there is no perfect or right thing to say to someone in these situations and it is better to show support and offer to help than to say nothing at all.

What should they do next?

If your young person is worried that the person they know is at immediate risk of suicide or in the process of making a suicide attempt:

- encourage the person at risk to call 000;
- contact the person's family or someone in their social network who may be able to check on them; and
- if you cannot reach the person, or anyone in their family or social network, call 000 on their behalf. They will ask you for your name and contact details, information about the person you are calling about, what they have said that indicates that they are at risk, the date and time of their post/message and the person's current location (if you know).

If the person is not at immediate risk of suicide, encourage your young person to:

- reassure the person that that support is available and that they should seek professional help;
- ask them if they would like to talk, or what you could do to help;
- ask them if they know where to get help, or if they would like the contact information for some local support services (see section: [support services and extra resources](#), on page 21); and
- respect that they may not want to talk to you but encourage them to talk to someone.



Talking safely online after a suicide has occurred

When remembering someone who has died by suicide, it can be hard to know what to say or how to talk about the situation safely. Here are some things to remember:

These conversations are likely to be happening online.

Information shared online can reach tens of thousands of people, extremely quickly. Therefore, if there is a death by suicide within the community or in the public eye, young people are likely to come across this information online.

Young people frequently report that informal sources of support, such as websites or social media, are where they are likely to turn to for information or to discuss their own experiences of suicide (14).

These conversations can be overwhelming, but they can also be safe.

Many adults feel overwhelmed when approaching the conversation about suicide and social media use with young people. This is understandable and it's okay to feel worried about how your young person might respond. However, there is no such thing as a "perfect" conversation, and it is much more important to start the conversation and show your young person that you care and are willing to listen than to say "the right thing". Remember you don't have to have all the answers, and that you can reach out to a support service for further advice on how to help your young person (see section: [support services and extra resources](#), on page 21).

There are helpful ways to facilitate these conversations:

- model safe language (see section: [language matters](#), on page 12);
- encourage young people to talk about what they are feeling; and
- remind them that support is always available.

These conversations can be helpful.

Remind young people that if they are communicating online about someone who has died by suicide, there are ways [they can create a safe space where they can share positive stories and memories](#). This can be a helpful way for your young person to share their feelings and encourage positive conversations.

These conversations can be important for your young person's wellbeing and, when done safely, can help to prevent further suicidal behaviour.

It's important that conversations and posts online are always monitored for unsafe messages, and that support services are provided (see section: [support services and extra resources](#), on page 21).


Although social media can provide an opportunity for young people to talk about their feelings, it is important this is done in a safe way because social media also has the potential to cause harm. For example, misinformation and rumours can spread rapidly online, and content that sensationalises suicide or portrays suicide in either a positive or stigmatising way can lead to adverse outcomes, and in some instances, further suicidal behaviour in vulnerable individuals.

If a suicide death has occurred in your community, there are steps that the community can take to ensure that the conversations and information shared on social media are appropriate and helpful. The [#chatsafe guide for communities](#) is a helpful resource for communities who have lost a young person to suicide and provides important information for keeping other young people safe.

Self-care and taking control of the content that you see online

The #chatsafe guidelines advocate for practising self-care and checking in on your own wellbeing. This applies for young people themselves, but also their parents and carers. This could include things such as taking a break from social media, taking part in other activities or taking control of social media news feeds by blocking, hiding or reporting unsafe content.

When things are feeling too much, remind your young person that they could practice self-care and that it's okay to step away from social media and do something else.



"It's very difficult to keep up. Youth and children are earlier adopters of these things. I do think that becomes a bit of a divide between parents and children. As a parent, you've got to be involved in the conversation to understand what's going on. To be there for your children, or those you care about."

Parent



#chatsafe

The top 10 tips from the #chatsafe guidelines can be downloaded from the [#chatsafe website](#).



What young people want their parents and carers to know

"My mum isn't a mental health clinician, but she loves me - and that's enough."

Young person

→ Approach us with love, respect and compassion rather than fear or judgement.

Keep an open mind.

Social media isn't all bad, and in some ways it can provide me with some refuge.

Sit down and listen.

Take time to understand.

Validate my feelings.

Don't minimise what I'm going through, even if I'm being emotional.

Don't force me to share before I'm ready.

Don't panic!

It is much easier to share difficult things when I can feel that you are calm.

Build trust.

If I trust you, I'm much more likely to reach out to you for help. Please do not secretly follow my activity online - if you have questions, ask me directly.

Remind me of my strengths.

Encourage me to draw on them to help get through tough times.

→ You don't need to have all the answers or to fix my problems.

When I'm struggling, having you simply listen to me without judgment can be so nice.

→ If you're worried that I may be suicidal, ask me directly and non-judgmentally.

You might say, "Sometimes when people feel this way, they might think about suicide. Are you having thoughts of suicide?"

→ Help me to understand the risks and benefits of social media.

→ Understand that removing my access to social media is removing an important part of my life.

→ Point me towards helpful resources and let me know where to get professional help.

If or when I need it - this might include online mental health services (such as [ehespace](#)). Letting me know about safe spaces (such as LGBTQIA+ affirmative community groups), or linking me in with a mental health professional or a general practitioner.

→ If you're unsure how you can help, ask me!

You might simply say, "Is there anything I can do to help you right now?"


→ Consider your own use of social media.

We all struggle with the amount of time we spend on our phone. Instead of focusing only on my screen time, it helps if you can shift the conversation from, "You should do this" to "This has been really helpful for me, what do you think might help you?"

Support services and help available

Reporting and using the safety functions within each platform

If a young person comes to you with distressing content that they have seen online, or if you come across this content yourself, there are reporting functions built into each platform. This can be helpful, particularly if you think the content may be upsetting to others or if it suggests that someone may be at risk. Some of the more popular sites are listed below, however you can find more information on each platform and the reporting functions they offer at the website of the [eSafety commissioner](#).



"It really helps if parents know about youth-friendly mental health resources and services and can point me to these."

Young person

Facebook

[Facebook Help Centre](#) has a number of tools to help people who have come across suicide-related material. The Suicide Prevention Help Centre provides information on how to report suicide content to a trained member of their safety team who will identify the post and the location of the user. If necessary, they can contact emergency services to assist those at risk of suicide or self-harm. The Suicide Prevention Help Centre also provides information on country-specific suicide prevention helplines to assist people who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts, feelings or behaviour.

Instagram

[Instagram Help Centre](#) provides details to assist users to report content that suggests a person may be at risk of suicide or self-harm. Users can report content by

- 1. Selecting ... (on iOS) or : (on Android) above the post and tapping "Report".**
- 2. Tap "It's inappropriate".**
- 3. Selecting "Self injury".**
- 4. Tapping "Report".**

The help centre also provides links to suicide prevention websites and hotlines that can assist people during a suicidal crisis.

Snapchat

[Snapchat Support Centre](#) recommends users who are concerned about a fellow user encourage the person to seek help or consult with a professional service. If users don't feel comfortable engaging with the person who may be at risk of suicide, they can report a safety concern by:

- 1. Going to the snap you want to report.**
- 2. Opening the snap, press and hold on it and select "Report snap".**
- 3. Select "More options".**
- 4. Select "I'm worried that this Snapchatter might hurt himself/herself".**

Twitter

[Twitter Help Centre](#) provides information on how to report self-harm and suicide-related content to a trained team devoted to responding to people who share content that suggests they may be at risk of self-harm or suicide. Information on how to recognise the signs of self-harm and suicide are provided, as well as an online form to alert the Twitter suicide prevention response team.

TikTok

If you come across a video that makes you worried about someone's safety, TikTok recommends that you report it and they will then reach out to them with some appropriate resources and support information. It's important to know that the user who posted the content will not be in trouble. To report someone's content:

- 1. Tap the arrow at the bottom right hand corner of the video**
- 2. Tap the 'report' icon**
- 3. Select 'self-injury' and then provide a description of your concerns.**

The [TikTok Safety Centre](#) also contains local suicide prevention hotlines as well as information on how to report self-harm and suicide-related content.

Discord

Discord recommends that users who are concerned about a fellow user encourage the person to seek help or via one of the hotlines listed in the [Discord Safety Centre](#). Discord also suggests contacting the server administrator or owner to let them know about your concerns so they can moderate the server and offer support to the individual. You can also report your concerns to the Discord Trust & Safety team via [this online form](#).

Support services that are available in-person, online or over the phone

If you or a young person you know needs support, reaching out for help can feel daunting. However, there are lots of support services who are there to support you, and reaching out is often the first step towards feeling better. We have listed some online and in-person supports below.

It's also important to take care of your own mental health and think about how you can model healthy and responsible use of social media to your young person.

If at any point you or somebody else is at immediate risk, call 000. You can also attend your local hospital emergency department for urgent support.

For everyone

Your local GP

Emergency, police and ambulance 000

Local hospital emergency department

Lifeline Australia

Provides free 24/7 online and phone personal crisis support and suicide prevention services to all Australians.

Visit: www.lifeline.org.au

Call: 13 11 14 (available 24/7)

Suicide Call Back Service

Provides free telephone, online, and video counselling and crisis support to all Australians affected by suicide.

Call: 1300 659 467 (available 24/7)

Beyond Blue

Beyond Blue provides information as well as online and telephone support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health.

Visit: www.beyondblue.org.au

Call: 1300 22 46 36 (available 24/7)

MensLine

MensLine Australia is a telephone and online counselling service offering support for Australian men anywhere, anytime.

Visit: www.mensline.org.au

Call: 1300 78 99 78 (available 24/7)

Qlife

QLife provides anonymous and free LGBTI peer support as well as referral for people in Australia wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships.

Young people can access support via web chat or phone.

Visit: www.qlife.org.au

Call: 1800 184 527

(available 3pm-12am)



For young people

Kids Helpline

Provides free and confidential phone and online counselling for children and young people aged between five and 25 years.

Visit: www.kidshelpline.com.au

Call: 1800 551 800 (available 24/7)

headspace

headspace centres are located throughout Australia and are staffed with people who are trained and ready to help. Find a centre near you.

Visit: <https://headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/>

eheadspace

Provides email, chat and phone counselling for young people aged 12 to 25, and their family and friends. eheadspace operates seven days a week, from 9:00am to 1:00am AEST. As a parent or carer of a young person, you can also request an online or telephone appointment with a family clinician.

Visit: www.headspace.org.au/eheadspace

Call: 1800 650 890

(available 9am-1am AEST, 7 days).

ReachOut online forums:

ReachOut Australia provides an online space for young people aged 14-25 to hang out and discuss what's on their mind.

Visit: www.au.reachout.com/forums

For parents and carers

Parentline and other state-based parenting helplines

Parentline is a telephone counselling and support service for a parents and carers of children from 0-18 years. Parentline services are state-based and the contact numbers vary accordingly.

A repository of Parentline services and their contact details are listed on the Raising Children website.

Visit: www.raisingchildren.net.au

ReachOut: parents and carers coaching service

Provides free and confidential one-on-one support with a professional family and parenting coach.

Visit: <https://parents.au.reachout.com/one-on-one-support>

Transcend

Transcend provides online and face-to-face peer support, information and advocacy for parents and carers of trans and gender diverse young Australians.

Visit: www.transcendaus.org

Extra resources that you might find helpful

#chatsafe for parents and carers: An online conversation Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTffIXROZI4>

#chatsafe: A guide for communities
Using social media following the suicide of a young person and to help prevent suicide clusters
Link: [https://www.orygen.org.au/chatsafe/Resources/A-guide-for-communities-\(1\)/A-guide-for-communities](https://www.orygen.org.au/chatsafe/Resources/A-guide-for-communities-(1)/A-guide-for-communities)

Coping with self-harm: A guide for parents and carers
Helping parents, carers and family members cope when a young person is self-harming.
Link: <https://www.orygen.org.au/copingwithselfharm>

#chatstarter - National Mental Health Commission
Helping parents and young people support each other
Link: <https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/chatstarter>

Beyond Blue: Child mental health checklist (suitable for ages 4-16)
Asks questions about how your child has been thinking, feeling and behaving. It can help you decide if your child needs professional support. The checklist is confidential.
Link: <https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au/age-6-12/mental-health-conditions-in-children/child-mental-health-checklist>

headspace: For friends and family
Information on how to support a family member, tips for a healthy headspace, understanding adolescence and how to start a conversation about mental health.
Link: <https://headspace.org.au/friends-and-family/health-and-wellbeing/>

Kids Helpline
Support your child to manage the risks in their online world but still enjoy its benefits.
Link: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents/issues/social-media-and-safety>

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner

Learn about the latest games, apps and social media, including how to protect your information and report inappropriate content.
Link: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents>

Raising Children Network

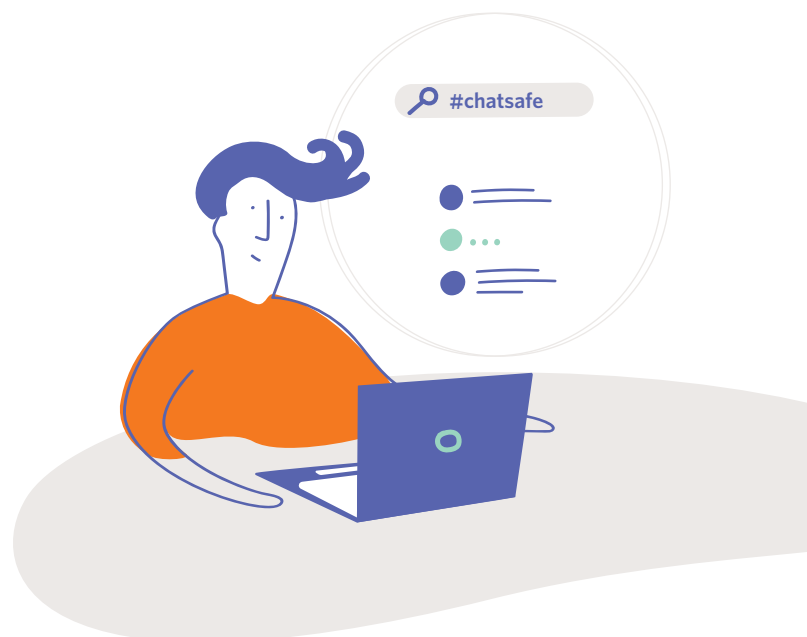
Information about depression in pre-teens and teenagers.
Link: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/pre-teens/mental-health-physical-health/stress-anxiety-depression/depression>

ReachOut

A parent's guide to Instagram.
Link: <https://parents.au.reachout.com/landing/parentsguidetoinsta>

Victorian Government Department of Education and Training

Looking after your child's mental health - An easy read version.
Link: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/family-health/Pages/your-childs-mental-health.aspx>



Keep up to date with #chatsafe

At #chatsafe, we constantly aim to support young people and the adults in their lives to the best of our ability, with updated evidence and the latest research. To stay up to date with the work we do at #chatsafe and the resources available to you, keep an eye on our website: www.orygen.org.au/chatsafe

We also regularly update our social media pages with information for young people, which you might want to send on to your young person or use as a conversation starter. You can follow us on:

- Instagram: [@chatsafe_au](https://www.instagram.com/chatsafe_au);
- Facebook: [@chatsafe.online](https://www.facebook.com/chatsafe.online);
- Twitter: [@chatsafe_au](https://twitter.com/chatsafe_au); and
- YouTube: [#chatsafe AU](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)



References

1. Robinson J, Hill NT, Thorn P, Battersby R, Teh Z, Reavley NJ, et al. The #chatsafe project. Developing guidelines to help young people communicate safely about suicide on social media: A Delphi study. *PLoS One*. 2018;13(11):e0206584.
2. Thorn P, Hill NT, Lamblin M, Teh Z, Battersby-Coulter R, Rice S, et al. Developing a suicide prevention social media campaign with young people (The #chatsafe project): co-design approach. *JMIR Mental Health*. 2020;7(5):e17520.
3. La Sala L, Teh Z, Lamblin M, Rajaram G, Rice S, Hill NT, et al. Can a social media intervention improve online communication about suicide? A feasibility study examining the acceptability and potential impact of the #chatsafe campaign. *PLoS One*. 2021;16(6):e0253278.
4. Facebook Safety Centre. Suicide Prevention. Available from: <https://www.facebook.com/help/594991777257121>
5. Fortune S, Sinclair J, Hawton K. Adolescents' views on preventing self-harm. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*. 2008 Feb;43(2):96-104.
6. Curtis S, Thorn P, McRoberts A, Hetrick S, Rice S, Robinson J. Caring for young people who self-harm: A review of perspectives from families and young people. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2018 May;15(5):950.
7. Bender TW, Fitzpatrick S, Hartmann MA, Hames J, Bodell L, Selby EA, Joiner Jr TE. Does it hurt to ask? An analysis of iatrogenic risk during suicide risk assessment. *Neurology, Psychiatry and Brain Research*. 2019 Sep 1;33:73-81.
8. Polihronis C, Cloutier P, Kaur J, Skinner R, Cappelli M. What's the harm in asking? A systematic review and meta-analysis on the risks of asking about suicide-related behaviors and self-harm with quality appraisal. *Archives of Suicide Research*. 2020:1-23.
9. Robinson J, Bailey E, Hetrick S, Paix S, O'Donnell M, Cox G, et al. Developing social media-based suicide prevention messages in partnership with young people: exploratory study. *JMIR Mental Health* 2017 Oct 4;4(4):e40 10:44
10. Bartik W, Maple M, McKay K. Suicide bereavement and stigma for young people in rural Australia: a mixed methods study. *Advances in Mental Health*. 2015 Jan 2;13(1):84-95.
11. Mythbusters. Suicidal Ideation. Available from: <https://www.orygen.org.au/Training/Resources/Self-harm-and-suicide-prevention/Mythbusters/Suicidal-Ideation>
12. Bohanna I, Wang X. Media guidelines for the responsible reporting of suicide: A review of effectiveness. *Crisis*. 2012;33(4):190-8. pmid:22713977.
13. Volkow ND, Gordon JA, Koob GF. Choosing appropriate language to reduce the stigma around mental illness and substance use disorders. *Neuropsychopharmacology*. 2021 Jul 19:1-3.
14. Pretorius C, Chambers D, Coyle D. Young people's online help-seeking and mental health difficulties: Systematic narrative review. *JMIR Mental Health*. 2019;21(11):e13873.



www.orygen.org.au/chatsafe