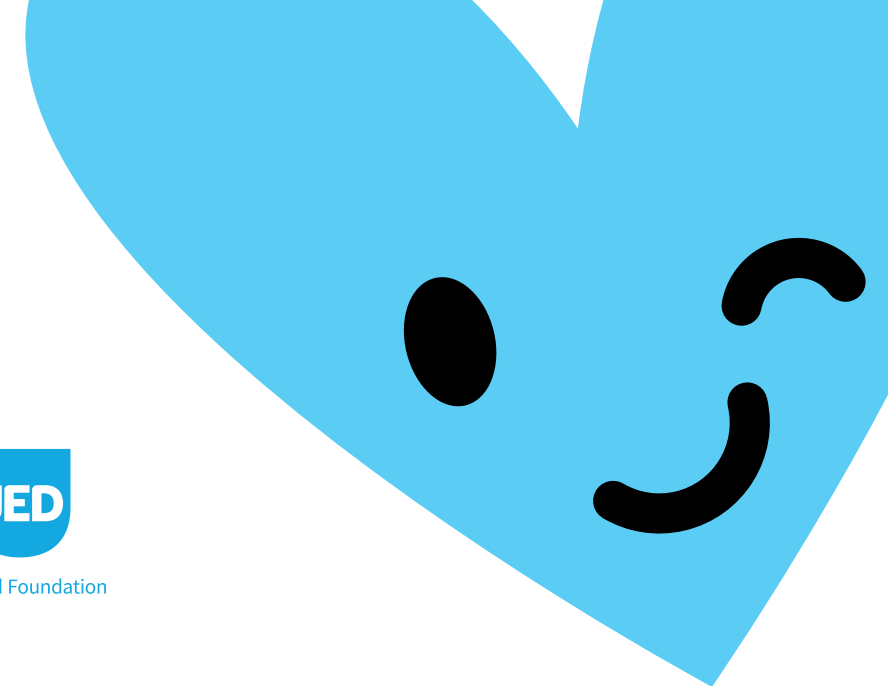




The Jed Foundation

# A TOOLKIT ADDRESSING THE PRESSURE TO BE PERFECT



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# We want your time on Instagram to be positive, inspiring, and intentional.

This toolkit, a collaboration between Instagram and The Jed Foundation (JED), is here to help you figure out the best ways for you to use the platform. We want to encourage you to be mindful of how time online impacts your emotional well-being, share some tips and tools that can improve your experience, and connect you with resources for further thought and discussion.

**Pressure to be Perfect** is about recognizing that what you see posted by others is just one part of their story—a single post or video rarely reflects all that is happening behind the scenes. That realization can help free us from the pressure of thinking we need to conform to a certain set of standards when we post moving from a mindset of comparing yourself with others to one where you are thoughtfully sharing yourself with others could help make the time you spend on Instagram more intentional and rewarding.

# This is a tool book, not a rule book. We're not here to tell you who you are or what to do.

**Pressure to be Perfect** is about helping you to decode not just images, but the emotions around them—how you feel when you're on Instagram, how you feel about content and people you come across, how you feel about what you share—and even what it feels like not to share. With that self-awareness, you can use these tools and suggestions to make informed decisions about how you use the platform. And it's not all about you—we'll talk about ways to reach out to others who might need help.

Like Instagram, this toolkit is meant to be fun! It is intended to suggest ways for you to create connections and conversations. Try taking some of the quizzes with a friend or a parent and talking about your results, or sharing some of the insights you take away after reading.



# Are you getting the most out of Instagram?

Editing a photo to look just right or landing on a caption that cracks you up are part of what makes Instagram fun—and there are other skills that can improve your time spent online. A big part of **Pressure to be Perfect** is making sure you have a strong sense of what you want to share and when, keeping a good perspective on the role the platform plays in your life, and knowing how to help others who seem to be struggling. These tools can help you be better to yourself and self others on Instagram.

**We created a few quizzes as a way for you to check in with yourself. Knowing where you already have things figured out and where you want to be more intentional is a great way to keep your time on Instagram positive.**

## 1. Sharing with sensitivity

When you share something—whether it’s a meme, your thoughts on friendship, or a video of your pet—it’s important to think about where you’ll share it and who will see it.

Turn to the quiz on page 7 and learn more.

## 2. Maintaining perspective

Sometimes online interactions can take an emotional toll—especially if you fall into the habit of negatively comparing yourself with others. Being mindful of your emotions and being able to put them into context can help.

Turn to the quiz on page 13 and learn more.

## 3. Responding with kindness

There are times when you might see others experiencing distress or saying things that set off alarm bells. What’s the best way to help someone online?

Turn to the quiz on page 19 and learn more.

# Sharing with Sensitivity Quiz

These quizzes are designed to help you check in with yourself about what feels right and comfortable. In each scenario, choose the options closest to what you think you would do. Use the results as a jumping-off place to reflect on how you use Instagram and to decide whether you want to make any changes.

Remember: There are no wrong answers :)



Question 1 / 4

## Sharing with Sensitivity Quiz

**You finally finished the monster paper that was destroying your life. You:**

- A** Post a meme about freedom, with a long caption about why it was really hard for you, and thank your friends who helped you get it done.
- B** Post a selfie holding up a sign that says “I’m FREE”
- C** Go out for coffee with friends to celebrate.



Question 2 / 4

## Sharing with Sensitivity Quiz

You're out with your friends and take a picture of one of them with a popcorn bucket over her head. Her parents don't allow her to be on Instagram, but you really want to post it. You:

- A** Get her permission and post it publicly, making sure no one can tell who it is.
- B** Get her permission and post it to "Close Friends Only," so only people who were at the party can see it.
- C** Don't post it.

Question 3 / 4

## Sharing with Sensitivity Quiz

**You're having a hard time with someone at school who seems to have it out for you. It's making you feel paranoid and bummed out. You:**

- A** Post a sad selfie and lay the whole thing out in the caption. You want people to know you're hurting.
- B** Post an Instastory of you with a friend who is treating you right. You want to keep it positive and show you've got better people to hang out with.
- C** Skip posting and talk it over with another friend or someone in your family.

Question 4 / 4

## Sharing with Sensitivity Quiz

**You are really worked up about an issue you care about. You:**

- A** Do a lengthy Instagram Story laying out your feelings, and then do an Instagram Live later to talk about it more.
- B** Post a picture of yourself to Feed that slightly relates to the issue, with a one-sentence caption.
- C** Follow accounts of other people who care about this issue, so you can learn more before you post anything.

## Results

# Sharing with Sensitivity Quiz

### Mostly A

From your answers, it seems that you love posting all kinds of things about your life—but you’re also thoughtful about what you post and respect that not everyone is as open as you are. You might want to occasionally take a step back and consider your posting options—once something is public, it’s there for everyone to see. You could explore having a private account, or limiting some of your content to “Close Friends.” Turn to page 25 to learn more about customizing your Instagram experience.

### Mostly B

Based on your answers, you’re sensitive and thoughtful about what you share and where you share it. We love that you’re focused on being true to yourself and surrounding yourself with people who will build you up and cheer you on. Give yourself a pat on the back! If you want to learn more about how to make Instagram work for you, turn to page 25.

### Mostly C

Based on your answers, it seems that privacy is important for you—whether it is yours or someone else’s. You’re comfortable with the amount of sharing you do online. If you want to learn more about how to make Instagram work for you, turn to page 25.

# Maintaining Perspective Quiz

These quizzes are designed to help you check in with yourself about what feels right and comfortable. In each scenario, choose the options closest to what you think you would do. Use the results as a jumping-off place to reflect on how you use Instagram and to decide whether you want to make any changes.

Remember: There are no wrong answers :)

Question 1 / 4

## Maintaining Perspective Quiz

**You post a selfie in the morning before school. At lunch, you check your phone and no one has liked or commented on it. You:**

- (A)** Decide to check again later. Everyone's been in class, anyway.
- (B)** Delete the photo—obviously you look really weird in it or something.
- (C)** Tell your friends you need them to like and comment as soon as possible.

Question 2 / 4

## Maintaining Perspective Quiz

**Your aunt comments on every single thing you post, and it's incredibly embarrassing. You:**

- A** Ignore her. She means well.
- B** Turn comments off on your posts, and set your stories to allow replies from "People You Follow." Technology saves the day.
- C** Ask your dad to ask her to stop.

Question 3 / 4

## Maintaining Perspective Quiz

**You log on and see a picture of all of your friends hanging out without you. You:**

- A** Talk to your closest friend about it to see if you're being paranoid or if there is something you should know.
- B** Don't say anything, but start checking their Instagram accounts more and more frequently to see if it's happening a lot.
- C** Message them each separately, telling them that your feelings are really hurt.



Question 4 / 4

## Maintaining Perspective Quiz

**You're an artist. You work hard, and many people applaud your talent. You start an Instagram account to showcase your art. At first, it's exciting to be followed by friends, but new followers and comments are soon scarce. People only "Like" and move on. You:**

- (A)** Are disappointed, but you know your friends like your art. You look for other artists whose work you like—maybe they'd follow you back.
- (B)** Delete your account—this feels like a failed experiment.
- (C)** Post on your main feed that you're thinking of giving up art.

## Results

# Maintaining Perspective Quiz

### Mostly A

From your answers it looks like you have a great perspective about the role of Instagram in your life. We love your strong sense of self and desire to grow as a person. Appreciating the positive and not obsessing over something that might be negative is a life skill that's important for everyone to have. Go, you!

### Mostly B

Nice! Your answers suggest that you are a very thoughtful and sensitive person. It's important to be able to be thoughtful about what happens online and remember that what might seem catastrophic is actually minor. You might want to open up some conversations about your emotions with a friend or a family member and get their input. We want your time on Instagram to be positive—as well as the time when you aren't on Instagram! Taking a step back to give yourself some space could make a big difference.

### Mostly C

It looks like you're in touch with your feelings and have a perspective that works for you. It also seems like you have a strong support system. If you sometimes feel upset about the response or lack of response you get on Instagram, you might want to take a step back to explore those feelings and how you deal with them. It may be helpful to make sure that the time you spend online is in balance with the rest of your life. To learn more about balance, turn to page 32.

# Responding with Kindness Quiz

These quizzes are designed to help you check in with yourself about what feels right and comfortable. In each scenario, choose the options closest to what you think you would do. Use the results as a jumping-off place to reflect on how you use Instagram and to decide whether you want to make any changes.

Remember: There are no wrong answers :)



Question 1 / 4

## Responding with Kindness Quiz

**A cartoonist you follow online is posting comics that talk a lot about depression and hopelessness. Then they abruptly stop posting. You:**

- (A)** Figure they must have taken a break.
- (B)** Send them a message saying you love their work and noticed they'd stopped posting. You're wondering if everything is OK.
- (C)** Reach out to mutual friends and acquaintances to see if anyone has been in touch.

Question 2 / 4

## Responding with Kindness Quiz

**Your best gamer friend starts following a bunch of other gamers who tell jokes and say things that make you uncomfortable—and your friend has been sharing that content, so you have to see it. You:**

- A** Mute your friend online but stay friends off-line—maybe it's just a phase.
- B** Bring it up next time you hang out and ask what the appeal is. You genuinely want to know because it doesn't feel right to you.
- C** Tell your friend they have a choice: their new friends or you.

Question 3 / 4

## Responding with Kindness Quiz

**You run into a classmate who's extremely upset. They tell you that their best friend has been talking about mental health issues and has indicated a high level of distress. You:**

- A** Go home and keep texting to check in on developments—you're worried, but you don't know what to do.
- B** Suggest that you call the friend or go see them so you can assess the situation.
- C** Contact a text line for support.

Question 4 / 4

## Responding with Kindness Quiz

**A friend of yours said something stupid on Instagram. They took it back and apologized, but the comments on their post are getting ugly. You:**

- A** Don't say anything—it will blow over.
- B** Make plans with them, then casually bring up the situation to see if they want to talk. If they ask for advice, you plan on suggesting they take a break or go on private.
- C** Post a public defense of your friend, calling out the bullies and telling them to stop.

## Results

# Responding with Kindness Quiz

### Mostly A

From your answers, we can tell that you're empathetic and care about other people—you notice when someone seems down or upset. It can be hard to know what to do or say in these situations, no matter how old you are.

### Mostly B

Your answers tell us that anyone would be lucky to have you as a friend. Reaching out when you see someone who seems to be upset is a meaningful and kind thing to do.

### Mostly C

Based on your answers, we see that you're a caring person who wants to help others. Sometimes it can be hard to know how to help, especially when the situation makes you emotional as well. Be sure to take care of yourself while you're taking care of others.

Turn to page 35 to learn more about reaching out to someone who's in pain, and remember that if you ever see a post on Instagram that makes you think someone might harm themselves, you can report it anonymously and a team will respond and connect that person to resources and help. To make a report, tap "..."<sup>1</sup>above the post, then tap Report. Select "It's Inappropriate > Self injury."





# It's Personal: How to make Instagram work for you.

Use these **Pressure to be Perfect** tips and Instagram tools to customize your experience and keep things positive.

## 1. Follow your feelings

Check in with yourself after you've been online for a bit. If you're thinking about all the things you need to change—your hair, your body, the way you dress—maybe you need to adjust the way you are experiencing Instagram. Look for people and accounts that connect you to new and existing interests and make you feel good about yourself.

## 2. Perform routine maintenance

Try going through the list of accounts you follow every once in a while and edit. As you go through them, consider unfollowing any accounts you're no longer interested in or accounts that bring you down in some way. Trimming your follow list periodically can open up space for new people who lift you up.

**HOW TO:** On your profile, click “Following.” Scroll through and tap the “Following” button next to anyone's name you want to unfollow. The button will turn blue. You can also go to someone's profile and tap “Unfollow.”

## 3. Find new follows

You can enrich your experience by regularly looking for new and interesting people to follow. Explore is one way to browse through accounts and topics—tap the magnifying glass when you open the app and try searching on a tag for something you enjoy like #baking, #bookstagram, #photography, or #nailart.

## 4. Mute people you don't want to unfollow

Try going through the list of accounts you follow every once in a while and edit. As you go through them, consider unfollowing any accounts you're no longer interested in or accounts that bring you down in some way. Trimming your follow list periodically can open up space for new people who lift you up.

**HOW TO:** Tap the “...” menu in the corner of one of their posts. You can choose whether to mute feed posts, story posts, or both from an account. You can also mute someone by pressing and holding on a story.

## 5. Use "Restrict" to protect your account from unwanted interactions

If someone is being aggressive or negative in your comment section, you can put them on a “Restricted” list. Comments from people you restrict will only be visible to them unless you approve them. Restricted people also won't be able to see when you're online or when you've read their messages. If you aren't ready to unfollow or block someone, you could try starting with “Restrict.”

**HOW TO:** You can restrict someone by swiping left on a comment, through the Privacy tab in Settings, or directly on the profile of the account you intend to restrict. Tap “Restrict” to add the account to your restricted list.

## 6. Block when necessary

If someone's behavior is impacting you negatively and muting isn't enough, block them. It's the best way to stop drama in its tracks. They won't be able to view your posts or find you in search, and they won't be notified that you did it.

**HOW TO:** Tap "⋮" on their profile, then tap "Block."

## 7. Make connections, not comparisons

You want to get inspired to make changes and explore new things, but not get into a space where you feel like you can't win because you are lacking something someone else has. Try to keep in mind that you're just seeing one part of their life, one that they've perfected and polished.

## 8. Choose your audience

Being public on Instagram is public in the true sense of the word. Anyone can see what you post—and once something is out there, it's pretty much impossible to get it back. You might want to make your account private so the only people who see your posts are the people that you want to see your posts.

**HOW TO:** Tap "profile button" on the bottom right and then either "options button" (for iOS) or "⋮" (for Android). Scroll down to "Private Account" and move the slider to the right. The slider will turn blue once the account is private. The accounts following you will still be following you—new followers will have to request access. If there is someone following you on private that you want to exclude, go to your followers list and tap to the right of their handle to remove them.

## 9. Report bullying

If someone is being aggressive online, consider if and how you want to respond. You can mute, unfollow, or block them using the tools on this page, or set your account to private. You can also report posts and profiles that are engaging in abusive or harassing behavior. If bullying is affecting your well-being, try reaching out to a friend or family member to talk about it. The Jed Foundation has created #LevelsLouder to address bullying and promote kindness—go to [LevelsLouder.com](https://LevelsLouder.com) for more resources.

**HOW TO:** Tap “...” above the post or at the top right of profile. Tap “Report,” and follow the instructions. Reporting is anonymous.

## 10. Avoid extreme stans

It’s cool to link up with the folks in your fandom—it’s how many great friendships are made. It’s probably best, though, to stay clear of the toxic side of fan culture, where people gang up on others and bully or harass them. Who wants to be a part of that?

## 11. Fine-tune your story sharing

Remember that—even if you have a private account—there are ways to post that are even more selective. You can use the “Close Friends” setting on stories so that only certain people see them. People who are unable to see the story won’t know that they are missing something.

**HOW TO:** Create a “Close Friends” list by tapping “☰” in your profile, then tapping “Close Friends.” Then, when you create a story, choose “Close Friends” at the bottom of the screen instead of “Publish to your profile.” You can also create a specific list for individual stories.

Threads from Instagram, a new camera-first messaging app, is another private space just for your close friends. Once you install the app, messages from people on your Close Friends will come straight to Threads, so that you never miss something from your inner circle.

## 12. Be direct

Sometimes you really just want to share with a few people. That’s smart! When things are really personal, you can feel really vulnerable. Instagram Direct is the most private way to share on Instagram, so consider using it in these situations.

**HOW TO:** To send a message (text, image, or video), click the “✈️” icon at the top right of your Feed and choose who to share it with (up to 15 people). You can also message someone by clicking that same icon from their profile.

### 13. Control comments

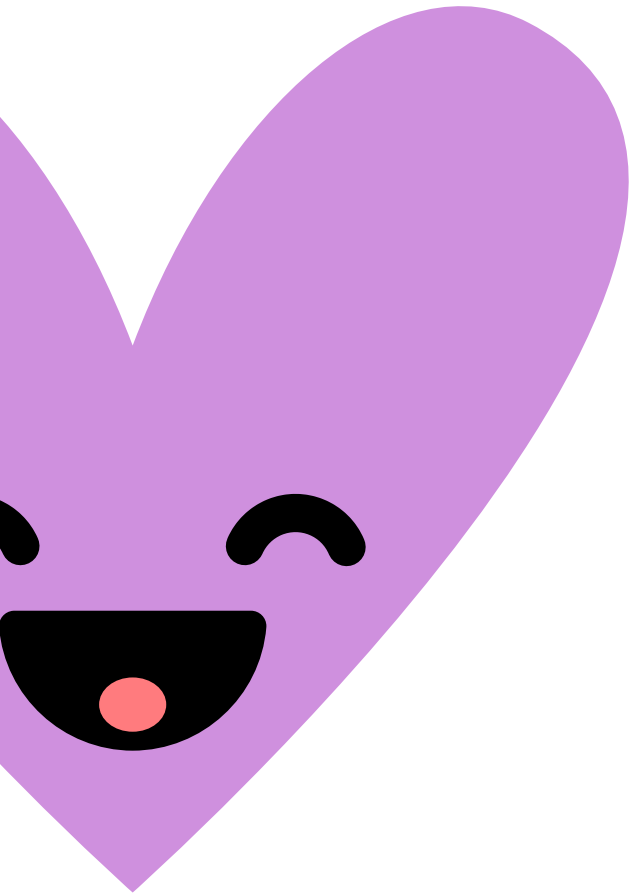
Your comment section is a great place for interaction and conversation, and for people to react to what you're posting. And because it's your comment section, you can proactively set it up to be the kind of space you want it to be. Some people are fine with a free-for-all. Some people never read their comments. There's also the option to allow only certain people to comment. This can be a great compromise if you want to stay public but don't want to let the entire world weigh in on what you're up to.

**HOW TO:** Go to settings and choose "Comment Controls." You can choose to allow comments from only your followers, or only the people you follow, or turn off comments entirely. You can also filter out comments that use any specific words or phrases that you find upsetting or prefer not to see.

### 14. Calm down conflict

Sometimes the comments on a post can get out of hand and even go places that have nothing to do with what you put up. If you're uneasy with a conversation going on in your comments, you can try letting people know by saying something like, "Hey, I think this has run its course. Let's move on." If that doesn't work, you can also delete comments or change your comment settings. (See above.) It's a good idea to let people know you are doing this, so it doesn't seem like an invisible hand suddenly began doing things. You can post, "I'm going to freeze these comments now," or message someone and say, "Hey I deleted your comment because...." A little communication can prevent hurt feelings.

**HOW TO:** To delete a comment, swipe left and tap "Delete." To turn off comments on a post, tap "... " at the top right, then choose "Turn off commenting."



# Balancing Act

The quality of the time you spend online is incredibly important to your well-being. So is the quantity; too much screen time could mean that you are neglecting other important things in your life. Use this worksheet to consider what the right amount of Instagram use is for you, and explore some tools to help you set limits. The goal is to make the most of all of your time, online or off.



## 1. Check your measurements

There is an easy way to see how much time you are spending on Instagram. Head to your settings page and tap on “Your Activity.” You’ll see a dashboard with the average amount of time you spend on Instagram. Tap any bar to see your time for a specific day. Surprised by what you see? You might benefit from cutting back.

## 2. Set a reminder to log off

If you want to cut back on your screen time, you can set a daily reminder that will alert you when you’ve been on for a certain amount of time. Bonus: When you set a time limit, you might find yourself being more thoughtful about what you do on Instagram. To set up a reminder, go to your profile and tap “☰”. Then tap Your Activity > Set Daily Reminder. Choose the amount of time and tap Set Reminder.

## 3. Be in the moment

Sometimes having your phone around can distract you from really experiencing and enjoying what’s going on around you. Remember, you don’t need to post in real time. Try taking a few photos and then putting your phone away so you can really be present, then sharing them later with your thoughts. Bonus: You’re less likely to make a typo.

## 4. Mute notifications to help you focus

If you have trouble ignoring notifications, turn them off. Try muting notifications during times that you want to be off-line. It can also be helpful to physically put your phone away in a drawer or another room during meals, hangouts, or study sessions. To mute notifications, go to your profile and tap “☰”, then tap Your Activity. Tap Notification Settings and tap Pause All, then select how long you want to mute them. You can also mute specific types of notifications.

## 5. Give your phone a bedtime...

If you have trouble falling asleep, it could be because you use your phone too much late at night. Your brain needs time to rest. Try putting your tech to bed about an hour before you hit the hay.

### ...and a wake-up time

Checking your phone first thing in the morning isn't necessarily bad, but you might want to experiment with an a.m. routine that puts self-care at the center. Try doing a few things—showering, having breakfast, brushing your teeth—before you go online. You'll be more awake and able to interact with people, and you might get to school on time!



# Being a Friend Online: Help for hard conversations.

An important part of **Pressure to be Perfect** is being kind and supportive to others, in the same way you'd expect others to be kind and supportive to you. There might be times when you notice someone on Instagram who seems to be feeling sad or angry. It can be really difficult to know what to say or do in those moments. Here are some ideas.

## 1. Always take care of yourself first

If you are the person who is feeling sad or angry or bullied, talk to someone. If you don't have an adult or a peer you feel comfortable with, the Crisis Text Line is available 24/7 and is totally anonymous unless they need to contact emergency services to keep you or someone else safe. Text HOME to 741741 or go to [CrisisTextLine.org](https://www.crisistextline.org).

## 2. Know the signs to watch for in others

People may communicate their feelings in different ways, but there are things that can give you clues to their emotional state. Seize the Awkward, a campaign by JED, the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention (AFSP), and the Ad Council, suggests looking out for things like this:

- They're not acting like themselves
- They are taking more risks than usual
- They talk about feeling hopeless
- They're taking more drugs or drinking more
- They are harming themselves
- They don't feel like hanging out as much
- Their mind seems to be somewhere else
- They are so anxious they can't relax
- They've gotten negative about life

Everyone has some bad days, but if you notice someone exhibiting any of the above behaviors repeatedly, the tips on the following page can help you figure out what to do.

### 3. Reach out

A phone call, a text, or a DM telling someone that you care about them can mean a lot. You don't have to have all the answers—just letting them know that they aren't alone and that you care about them is a kind thing to do.

### 4. What to say

It's best to keep it casual. Try things like, "I've noticed you posting a lot of sad memes lately, are you OK?" or "I'm checking in on you because you seemed really upset the other day. How are you?"

### 5. Don't assume someone else will do it

You might think that a person has a lot of other friends, or that you don't know them well enough to get involved—but you never really know. It's likely better to check in and find out that they're fine than to ignore something that's worrying you.

### 6. If they open up, listen

Avoid offering advice or talking about yourself—keep the focus on the other person and how they are feeling. Asking questions like, "Have you talked to anyone else about this?" can be a way to see if they have support in the other parts of their life. **#SeizeTheAwkward** has some good guidelines on their website at [SeizeTheAwkward.org](https://SeizeTheAwkward.org).

## 7. Encourage them to get help

Sometimes we can get so caught up in our feelings that we don't see a way out. You can suggest that your friend talks to their parents or another responsible adult, or share resources like the Crisis Text Line.

## 8. Report concerning content

If you feel someone is in immediate danger to themselves or others, you should contact 911 first and then let us know so that we can help connect them to information and resources. There are teams all over the world working 24 hours a day, seven days a week to review these reports. The poster will not know who made the report, but they will get help the next time they open the app. To make a report, tap above the post, then tap Report. Select "It's Inappropriate > Self Injury."

## 9. When to tell someone

If the person you've reached out to doesn't show any signs of feeling better, if you start feeling uncomfortable with what they asked you to keep secret, or if their behavior gets more extreme, talk to an adult or a friend you trust about next steps. If you feel someone is in immediate danger to themselves or others, you should contact 911.

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