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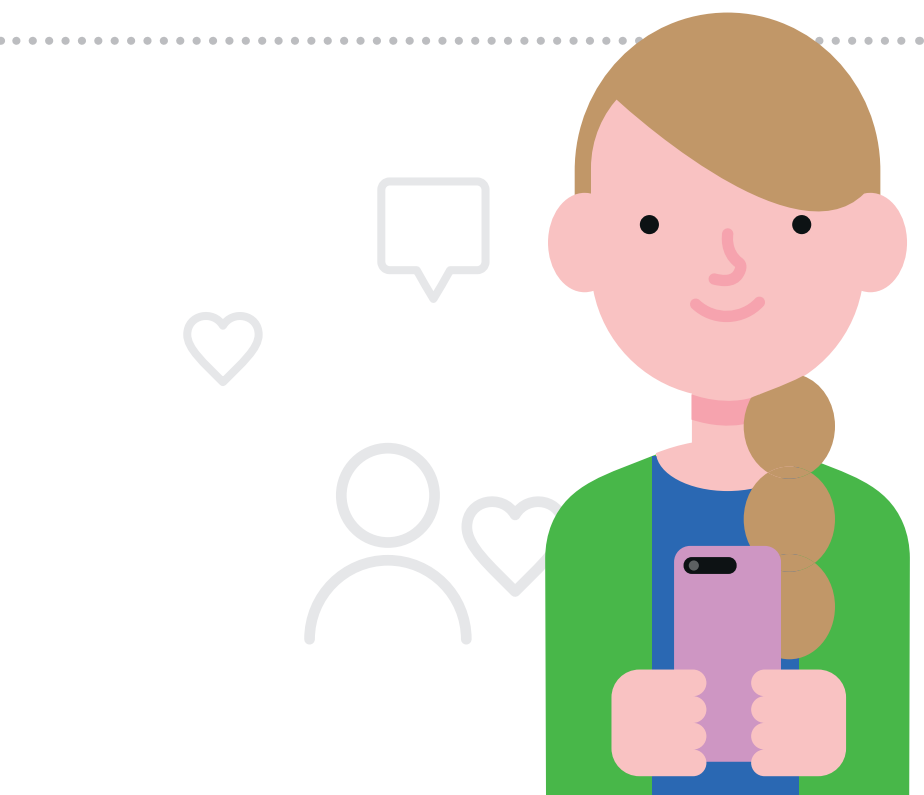
Advice for parents:

Addressing the pressure to be perfect toolkit



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Foreword



As almost every mum or dad knows, the wellbeing of our children is one of the things we worry about most, and in our increasingly connected digital world, the different kinds of pressures our children face online can sometimes make us feel unprepared to support them.

It can be tempting to simply try and restrict, monitor or control, but children get so much enjoyment from their digital world when creating, connecting, learning and simply having fun. We should find a way to ensure we are well-placed to help them stay happy and healthy online.

We are delighted to be supporting this new toolkit from Instagram, which helps both parents and children to address the pressure to be perfect.

The pressure to be perfect exists all around us, perfect beauty, perfect bodies, everyone having a perfect time; it can be hard for young people who are still developing their own identity to work out where they fit. Parents also tell us that they

are concerned about the effects of excessive screen time and the use of social media, and with this toolkit, we are providing them with not only practical advice on how to ensure their children stay safe, but also with techniques to help their children think critically about what they see and share online.

It's only right that young people are enthralled and captivated with their online world, but as parents, we have a role to play in ensuring we give them the life skills they need to make good decisions, to have resilience in the face of adversity, and the confidence and courage to seek help when they need it. We think this toolkit will be a great help.

Carolyn Bunting, CEO, Internet Matters

Addressing the pressure
to be perfect toolkit:

Making Instagram work for your child

Instagram provides a number of helpful tools that allow users to control their privacy levels and customise their experience. For young people, these tools can be especially helpful for creating a safe space to connect with others.

Find advice as well as tips below, on how they can customise their Instagram settings.



Manage privacy

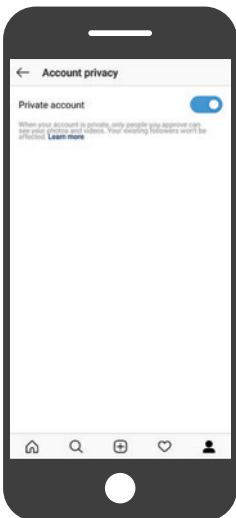
When first using Instagram, we encourage parents to **set their child's account to private**. If the account is private, your child can approve the people who follow them and they can remove followers at any time.

Conversation starter:

Talk regularly with your child about who they are connecting with **online** and the things that they are talking about.

How to set an account to private

- Go to **Settings**
- Tap **"Account privacy"**
- Swipe to set as **"Private"**



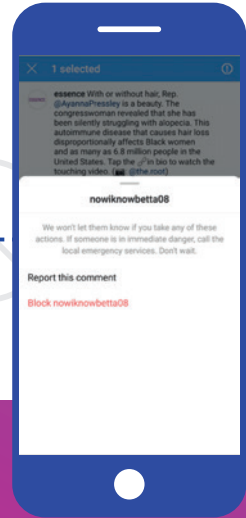
Making connections safer

Block unwanted interactions

Blocking is an immediate way to disengage from any negative interactions. This will block people from seeing and commenting on their posts. When you block an account, that person is not notified. You can unblock an account at any time.

How to block an account

- Tap “...” on profile
- Tap “Block”



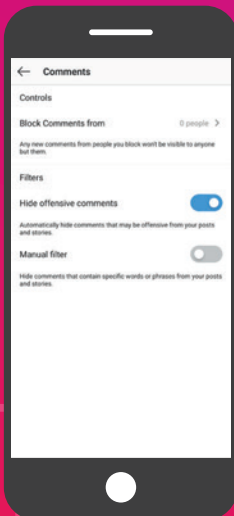
Manage comments

Your child can also control who can comment on their posts.

In the “Comments” section of the app settings, they can choose to:

- allow comments from everyone,
- allow comments from people they follow and those people's followers,
- allow comments just the people they follow, or their followers.

TIP: You can also hide offensive comments and add a filter to hide specific words or phrases from your posts and stories.



How to block or allow comments on post

- Go to your profile and tap the **menu icon**
- Tap “Settings”
- Tap “Privacy” > “Comments”
- Next to Block Comments from, tap “People”
- Enter the name of the person you want to block, then tap “Block” next to their name
- To unblock someone from commenting on your photos and videos, tap “Unblock” next to their name and then tap “Unblock” again to confirm

Report bullying

Bullying is against Instagram's community guidelines, and it's against their policies to create an account, post photos, or make comments for the purpose of bullying or harassing someone else.

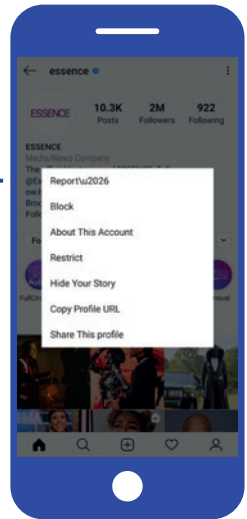
Conversation starter:

- Talk to your child about how comments can sometimes be misunderstood online so it's important to think about what they post.
- Let your teen know that if they experience any kind of bullying, or they spot an account, photo, video, comment, message or story that is intended to bully or harass someone, they should tell you and that they can and should report it.

How to report something

- Tap "..." on the right corner of the post or profile
- **Swipe left** on a comment or **tap and hold** the message
- Then tap **"Report"**

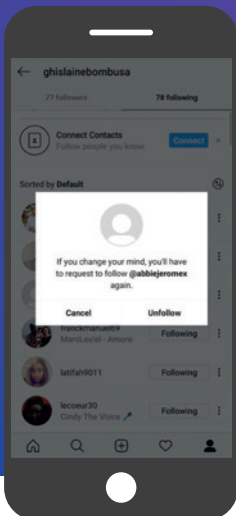
NB. Reporting is totally anonymous



Follower check-ins

How to unfollow someone

- Tap **"Following"** from account profile
- Tap **"Following"** next to any name you want to unfollow. The button will turn blue
- Or you can also go to someone's profile and tap **"Unfollow"**



Permission to unfollow

Young people may unintentionally keep following an account that is having a negative impact on them simply because they haven't stopped to think critically about that person's attitude and the impact it might be having on them.

Conversation starter:

Encouraging a regular review of their follow list can help open up discussion about their wellbeing and be an opportunity to create some distance from any awkward or uncomfortable situations.

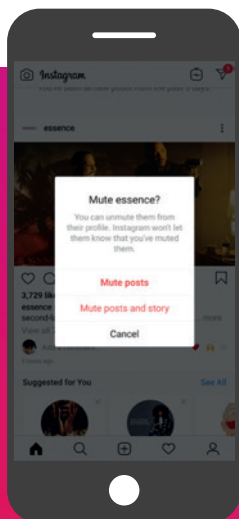
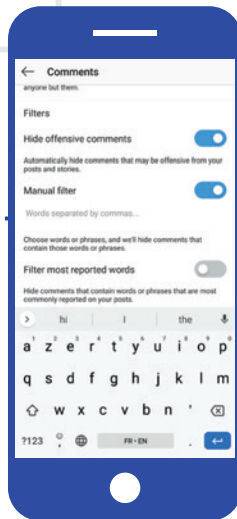
Filter it out

Instagram has filters that automatically remove offensive words and phrases and bullying comments. Your teen can also create their own list of words or emojis they don't want to have appear in the comments section when they post by going to **“Filters”** in the comments section.



How to filter words

- Go to your profile and tap **“Settings”**. Tap **“Privacy”** > **“Comments”**.
- Next to Block Comments from, tap **“People”**. Next to Hide offensive comments, swipe to toggle the feature on.
- You can also manually filter specific words or phrases from your posts or stories:
 - Next to Manual filter, swipe to toggle the Go to your profile and tap the menu icon . Tap **“Settings”**. Tap **“Privacy”** > **“Comments”**.
 - Next to Block Comments from, tap **“People”**. Next to Hide offensive comments, swipe to toggle the feature on.





Mute an account

Through your ongoing conversations, you may identify accounts that your teen isn't interested in interacting with but is hesitant to unfollow, as the person will see their action.



How to mute accounts

If you don't want to see someone's posts in your feed, you can mute them:

- Go to their profile by **tapping the search icon at the bottom**.
- Type their name into the search at the top and select their profile when it appears.
- Tap **“Following”** below their profile info and tap **“Mute”**
- Swipe to toggle the feature off – next to Posts.
- To unmute them, swipe to toggle the feature on, next to Posts.
- You can also mute them from feed:
- Tap (iPhone)  or  (Android) next to their post. Select **“Mute”** then **“Mute Posts”**.

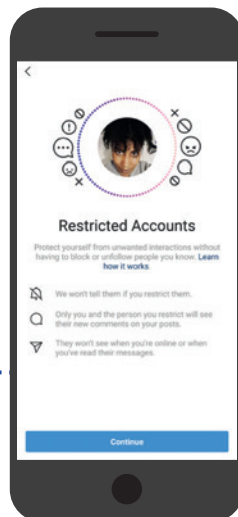
TIP: Muting will keep posts from those accounts from showing up in their feed, but the other person will not know they've been muted.

Use “Restrict” to control access

Restrict is another way to control which comments can be seen by your followers or publically. Comments from anyone on your “Restricted” list will not appear publicly unless you approve them first. Restricted people also won’t be able to see when you’re online or when you’ve read their messages. Young people may feel more comfortable using “Restrict” or “Mute” as an initial response, and then blocking or unfollowing if the problem persists.

How to restrict an account

- Access **Restrict** 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.

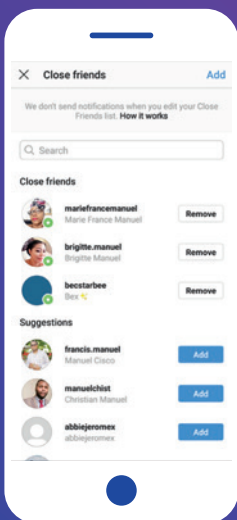


Building strong connections

Young people should be inspired on Instagram and feel empowered to explore new things. However, **it's important to check in and make sure your child isn't becoming discouraged by comparing themselves to others** and feeling that they don't measure up to unrealistic ideals.

Conversation starter:

Ask them about how things like Instagram accounts, or people's lives on Instagram can appear “perfect” when they aren't, can be incredibly helpful, as this can encourage them to follow people who are just as inspiring but more relatable.



How to create a Close Friends list

- Go to the **main menu**
- Tap **“Close friends”**
- Tap **“Add”** next to profiles to add close friends

Use “Close Friends”


Even with have a private account, **there are ways to post that are even more selective.** The “Close Friends” setting on a story will keep anyone who isn't on a “Close Friends” list from seeing the story. Importantly, people who are unable to see the story won't know that they are missing something.



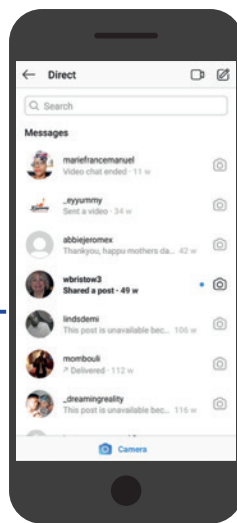
Send messages directly

Direct Message (DM) is the most private way to share on Instagram, so we suggest using it when sharing something very personal – after considering whether or not to share it at all.

How to send a DM

- Tap the  at the top right of your Feed
- Then choose who to share it with (up to 15 people)

NB. You can also send a message to someone by tapping the same icon from their profile.



Share the young people's version of the Addressing the Pressure to Be Perfect toolkit with your child to support them.



Addressing the pressure
to be perfect toolkit:

Parents toolkit: Creating a positive image online

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*Get advice expert advice on
how to help your child build
and explore their online
identity safely.*



Knowing how to **help our young people balance the demands of daily life** with their budding sense of freedom and independence is a complicated task, especially when technology allows them the ability to do so much at one time!

While most parents try to keep general tabs on where their children are, offline and online, it can help to have a general understanding of areas in which you can expect to see signs of maturation.

Independence

A few things to look for:

- Do they have areas in their life where they have the **ability or freedom to make important decisions**?
- If they make mistakes, **are they able to recognise and learn** from them?
- Do they have opportunities for **trying out new skills**? In areas related to relationships, emotional maturity, or skill-building (putting effort into school is definitely one sign of this but there are other ways to build skills that set the stage for full independence, as well)



Being an adult requires multiple forms of independence in a number of areas.

For example, **being able to build and maintain positive relationships, manage emotions, and eventually to economically support yourself**, are areas in which you can expect to see maturation and change as young people move into adulthood.

Confidence

All people want to experience what it's like to be really good at least one thing.

Children will often work tirelessly on various projects just to start learning and practising the skills they will need later.

Confidence comes from discovering and developing natural talents and from working on skills that come less naturally.



A few things to look for:

- Do they have and take up **opportunities to master a skill in one or more area** (e.g. music, art, academics, athletics, social relationships)?
- Are they willing to **try new things**?
- Do they **recognise and appreciate** their achievements?

Connectedness

Connectedness is feeling cared for and caring for others.

We can be connected to individuals and to groups of people or places, like a school.

Children and young people will often experience a sense of connectedness in several life areas – to a family or particular family members, one or more friends, school, clubs, even their borough, town or city. No matter what it seems like from the outside, people with low connectedness rarely thrive.



A few things to look for:

- Do they have friends (at least one) or groups **they interact with and authentically enjoy being with?**
- Do they have **at least one confidant** –someone they feel like they can be themselves with?
- Do the relationships with their inner circle of friends **generally leave your teen feeling at least neutral if not upbeat?** (feeling or seeming chronically depressed or down after seeing one or more specific friends is generally a red flag)



A few things to look for:

- Do they have opportunities to **support and assist others** (people, plants, animals, anything that leads to feeling like one is contributing to something in a meaningful way)?
- Do they enjoy (or at least not complain too much about!) **contributing to others/groups** they are connected to?

Usefulness

Usefulness is the experience of someone making a contribution to something in the world one values (people, groups, or causes).

This can be as seemingly small as **helping a friend with something important** to her/him/them or as large as being part of a group where one has regular tasks and responsibilities. Experiencing oneself as useful can strengthen a sense of connectedness, confidence, and independence.

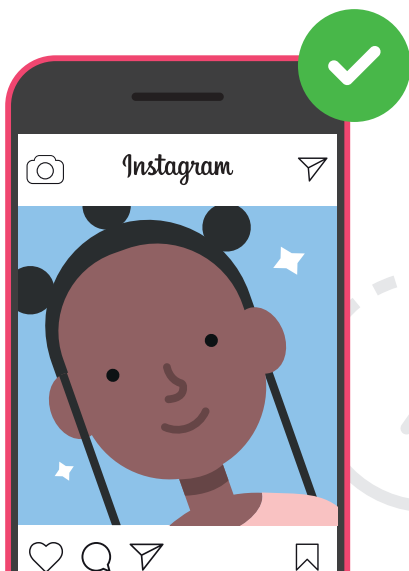
Advice provided by Dr. Janis Whitlock - Developmental Psychologist and the Director of the Cornell Research Program on Self-Injury and Recovery

Addressing the pressure
to be perfect toolkit:

Parents toolkit: The balancing act of screen time

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You will want to check in on how much time your child is spending on Instagram. There's no magic formula for determining the right amount – instead, we encourage young people to think about the purpose of being online, are they learning, creating or connecting and having a positive experience?



Instagram has created a set of tools that can help with those boundaries, and with managing time spent on Instagram.

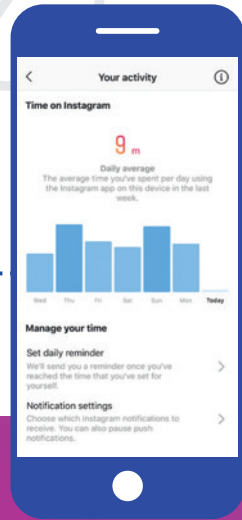
Below, is an explanation of the tools, and some tips on balancing screen time with time offline. ►►

THE TOOLS

Tracking time

The Activity Dashboard shows how much time has been spent on Instagram for the past day and week, as well as average daily time on the app. Tap and hold the blue bars to see how much time has been spent on Instagram on a certain day.

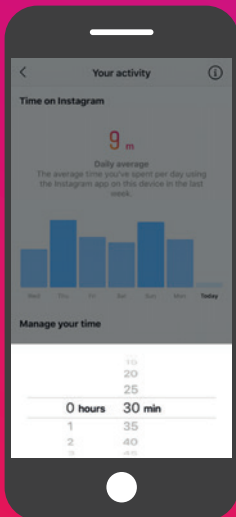
Using the tracking tool can open a discussion about time spent online and whether you might want to reduce it.

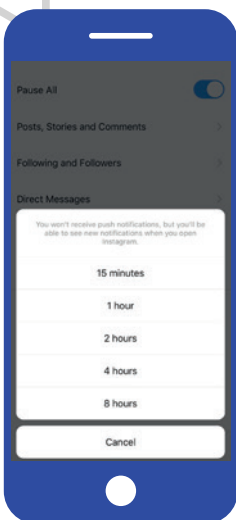


Setting limits

The daily reminder can be used to set a limit on the amount of time spent on Instagram. Talk with your teen about how they feel while using the app. Is there a point when they don't get as much out of it?

Setting the daily reminder together can be a good way to talk about how Instagram is being used throughout the day.

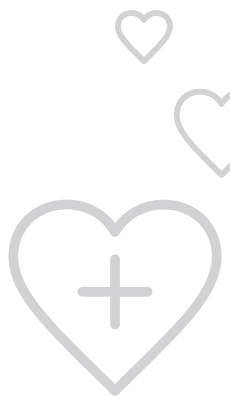




Making peace

The “Mute Push Notifications” feature can be used to silence Instagram notifications for a period of time. When the preset time is up, notifications will return to their normal settings without having to reset them. With notifications off, it may be easier to focus on other things without interruption.

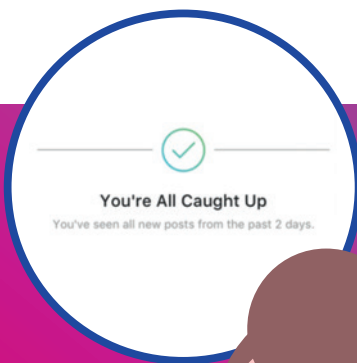
Notifications can also be tweaked so that messages from a study group come through, but not party posts, for example.



Hitting pause

Young people can feel pressure to see and interact with all of their friends' posts. When they scroll through every post on their feed since they last logged on, they'll see a message that says “You're All Caught Up.” This way, they'll know that they're up to date on everything their friends and communities are up to.

“You're All Caught Up” is automatically enabled.



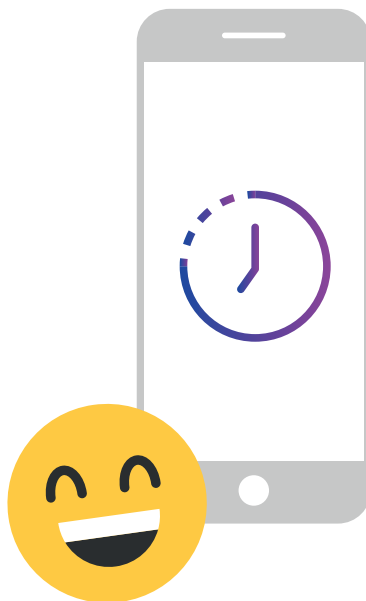
THE TIPS

Model the habits you'd like your teen to adopt

Living a life with intentional screen time is an important part of managing digital wellbeing and is good for you and for those around you. **Come up with guidelines that work for you, and work with young people in your life to do the same.** And be transparent if you struggle—if they know it's hard for you, they won't beat themselves up if it's hard for them.

Change over time

When teens first join Instagram you can explore the app together and discuss who to follow and set boundaries that you revisit from time to time. **With teens, it's important to understand that they need free space where they can explore and interact with others.**



Encourage phone-free activities

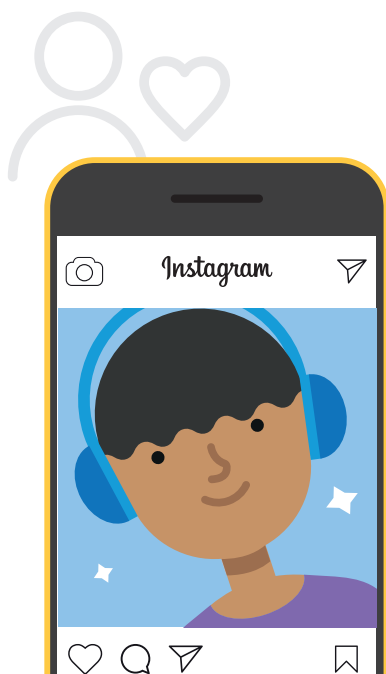
Help keep what happens online in perspective by ensuring a healthy balance of other activities.

You might want to start some family traditions that bring you all together without the need for devices. Why not have a weekly screen-free time? Or a digital detox every now and then, spending the time interacting with each other playing games, sport or watching a movie without your personal devices.

Addressing the pressure
to be perfect toolkit:

Parents toolkit: Supporting young people's wellbeing

It may never happen, but it's important for young people to know how to act if they're concerned about someone's emotional wellbeing on Instagram.



You may have already had discussions about mental health.

If not, **try bringing up the topic of skills for helping others** with kindness and without judgment. Instagram provides a number of tools for reporting concerning behaviour, which is explained below.

We've also included signs of distress for you to look out for. ►►

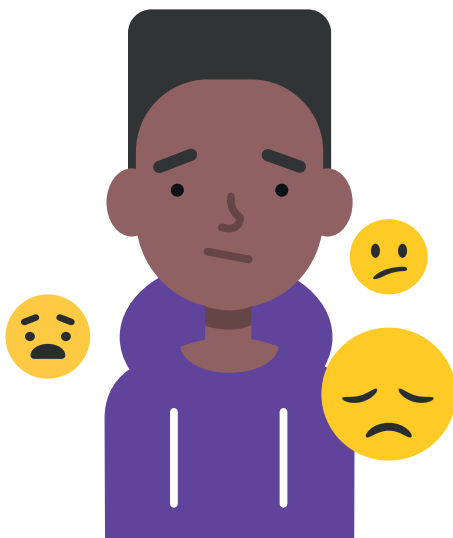


Know the signs to watch for

People may communicate their feelings in different ways, but there are things that **can give you clues to their emotional state.**

Here is a list of things you could look out for:

- 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 behaviours repeatedly, **the tips below can help you figure out what to do.** Alternatively, there are a number of organisations to reach out to such as:

[Childline](#)

[YoungMinds](#)

[Kooth.com](#)

[The Mix](#)

[Papyrus](#)

[Samaritans](#)

[Mind](#)



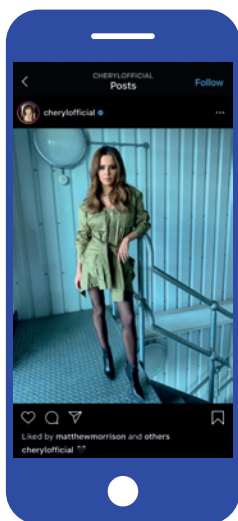
Reaching out

Helping someone can be as **simple as sending a quick DM or text.** Just letting them know that they aren't alone and that you care about them is a kind thing to do. Try a casual check-in like, "I've noticed you posting a lot of sad memes lately, are you OK?"

Asking questions like "Have you talked to anyone else about this?" can be ways to see if they have support in the other parts of their life. [Childline has some good guidelines](#) for this or share resources like the Shout free text line.



Reporting




We encourage young people who are worried that someone may be thinking about hurting themselves, **report this to Instagram** so they 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.

How to:

Report a post

- Tap the  above the post, then tap **Report**.
- Select **"It's Inappropriate > Self injury."**

In an emergency, contact authorities

If someone is in immediate physical danger, please contact the police or other immediate local authority services for help.

The Shout free text line is also available 24/7 and totally anonymous unless you need to contact emergency services to keep you or someone else safe. Text **SHOUT** to **85258**.





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Visit internetmatters.org/instagram-parents-toolkit to learn more