

Social media and mental health

Source: <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/social-media-and-mental-health/>

How you experience social media can affect your mood

Being connected is a big part of our lives. But if you're seeing stuff online which makes you feel angry, sad, worried, stressed, or annoyed, this can build up and start having a negative impact on your life.

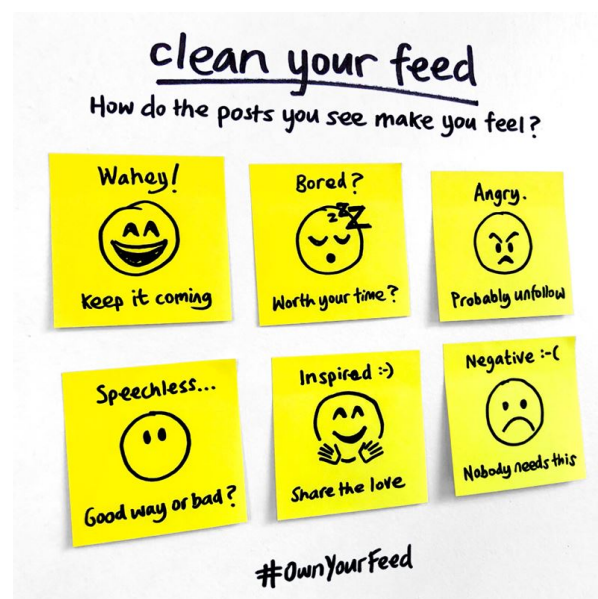
If you ever feel overwhelmed by the online world, unable to switch off, or find it difficult to cope, you're not alone. We all struggle to keep our online world positive sometimes.

How can I have a more positive time online?

1. Clean your feed

It's not always easy to tell why you're feeling down when you're online. Take some time to go through your social media feed to work out what's making you feel good, and what's not. Use these tips to help you:

- Try unfollowing or muting accounts that annoy you, upset you, or take up too much of your time.
- Remember you don't have to be on every social media channel. Try deleting one app from your phone for a week and see what happens.
- Try limiting your time on social media before you go to sleep and when you first wake up.
- Before you post or comment ask yourself: am I doing something positive for myself and the people who'll see this?
- Use our emoji scale to work out how stuff in your social media feed is making you feel.



2. Find your crowd

Whatever your passions are in life, you're not alone. There are accounts out there that will interest and excite you, and help you explore your passions.

Being part of a positive online community can give a boost to your mental health. Here are some tips to help you find yours:

- See which accounts people you enjoy following follow themselves and, explore the hashtags they use to discover more stuff like it. Don't forget to shout out positive people by liking, commenting and sharing their posts.
- Follow accounts that make you feel good, keep you interested and share positive content (e.g. [@youngmindsuk](#)).
- Build your own positive following, as well as following positive people. Did you know that you can select who follows you and what they see?
- You are not alone. Whatever your passion is, there will be other people online who share it. Find like-minded online communities and use social media to fuel your passions.

It's important to remember that while many online mental health communities are positive spaces, some can be negative for you and your recovery. Avoid any spaces that encourage you to do things which are harmful for your physical or mental health. If you're struggling with things you're experiencing online, talk to someone you trust.

3. Say hey

You never know what someone else is going through and, whether you realise it or not, your support could make all the difference.

Social media is a great place to let your friends know you haven't forgotten them, that you care about them and that they matter – and getting involved in making the online world a more positive place to be could give you a boost too! Here are some tips to get you started:

- What change would you like to see in the world? Use your feed to support the causes you care about and help make them happen.
- Check your mood before using social media, and think about what you're going on there to do before you dive in. Ask yourself: is social media going to make me feel better or worse right now?
- Remember: not all the advice you get online is from experts, even if it comes from people who know what you are going through. Positive communities will never advise you to do anything harmful, or anything which makes you feel worse.

Top tech tips and advice from an O2 Guru:

Managing your time

Apps like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube make it easy to track your time online, whether you're on iOS or Android.

For [Facebook](#), go to **More > Settings and privacy > Your time on Facebook**.

For [Instagram](#), go to **Your account > More > Settings and your activity**.

JTL Diversity, Safeguarding & Inclusion Team
Advice for Learners (April 2020)

You can set daily reminders telling you how long you've been using an app.

On Facebook for example, go to **Your time on Facebook > Set daily reminder**. Then set your ideal daily usage.

Apps like [Hold](#) are handy, especially if you're trying to focus on studying. Hold rewards you for putting your phone down. You get 'pocket points' which can be exchanged for coffee vouchers and cinema tickets. There are many other apps out there that help you stay off your phone, but don't reward you, like [Moment](#), Stay Focused and [OFFTIME](#).

Apps can help you relax

Meditation apps like [Calm](#) have stories that can help you get to sleep, as well as daily breathing exercises that help you relax. Calm even has masterclasses taught by world-renowned experts.

Sleep affects your mood

If you'd like to switch off the blue light your screen emits at night, some phones have night mode.

iOS

Go to Settings > Control Centre > Night Shift

Older iPhones have shortcuts to Night Shift if you swipe up from the bottom of the screen. The shortcut on newer iPhones appears if you drag down from the top right of the screen.

Android

Android devices often have an 'eye comfort' mode. This setting can be found by dragging your finger down from the top of the screen and tapping 'eye comfort'. If you press and hold this option, you'll also find a convenient schedule option to save you more work.

When you need to unwind, you may find that something simple like trying an audio book rather than reading on your phone may help. Apps like [Audible](#) come with a 30-day free trial.

Get free advice

For free advice, pop into any O2 shop to speak to an O2 Guru. Whether you're an O2 customer or not, you can chat to a Guru about setting up your phone and choose apps to work for you.

How can I deal with online bullying?

Source: <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/social-media-and-mental-health/>

Bullying is never okay, whether it's at college, at home, or on the internet. If you're being harassed or upset in any way online, reach out for help from someone you trust.

You can block and report the people involved, or, if you don't feel able to block someone, try muting them - they won't know you've muted them and you won't have to see their posts or messages.

You can also use the privacy settings on your social networks to limit what they can see on your profile. See below for tips on how to block, report or mute people on social media.

How can I block, mute or report other accounts?

Try these five tips for reducing negative content on Instagram:

Restrict: When you restrict someone, any comments they leave on your posts will only be visible to them. They won't be able to see when you're active on Instagram, and they won't know whether you've read a direct message from them.

Comment filter: You can let Instagram know if there are specific words, phrases or emojis you don't want to see and they will not come up on your posts again. You can do this in your privacy settings.

Comment warning: Instagram notifies people if they are writing a comment that other people may consider offensive before it's posted. This can be a good opportunity to reflect on whether you really want to post something, and how it might impact someone else.

Muting: If you mute another account, you will still be following them, but you can decide when you want to view their content. The account you've muted won't know you've muted them, so it's a good way to make your feed more positive while avoiding any potential conflict that may come from unfollowing or blocking someone.

Blocking: If you block someone, you won't see their content anymore, they won't see yours either, and your account won't appear in their searches or suggestions.

All social media channels have similar ways to reduce negative content, so check the help sections to find out how to make your online world more positive.

You can also report anything you find abusive, harmful or upsetting on all social media channels. Find out how to report things on:

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Tumblr](#) | [Pinterest](#) | [Snapchat](#) | [YouTube](#)

How can I look after my privacy?

Source: <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/social-media-and-mental-health/>

Here's some advice to help you work out what to share, how to avoid oversharing, and how to look after your privacy.

What you put online stays online - even things you delete can be saved or screenshotted – including those Snapchat snaps meant for just one friend.

Online strangers are still strangers - forums and group chats can be a great way to connect over things you wouldn't say face to face, but don't feel pressured to share more than you feel comfortable with.

It's easy to over-share on social media sites, especially if you forget who can see your profile. You can use social media channel settings to create lists so that only people you trust can see all your updates. For example, Instagram allows you to make your account private, or you can use the Close Friends tool to share your stories with a group of people you've chosen.

Privacy is possible - make sure you use social media site settings to protect your information. Don't hesitate to block anyone who makes you feel uncomfortable.

Where to find support

Whatever you're dealing with, and however you're feeling, support is available. If you're feeling upset or overwhelmed by anything you see online, talk to someone you trust.

Helplines and services available:

YoungMinds Crisis Messenger

Provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis
If you need urgent help text YM to 85258

All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors
Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

Visit [YoungMinds Crisis Messenger](#) page for more information

Childline

www.childline.org.uk

If you're under 19 you can confidentially call, email or chat online about any problem big or small
Freephone 24h helpline: 0800 1111

[Sign up for a childline account](#) on the website to be able to message a counsellor anytime
without using your email address

Chat 1:1 with an [online advisor](#)

Youth Access

www.youthaccess.org.uk

A place for you to get advice and information about counselling in the UK, if you're aged 12-25.

JTL Diversity, Safeguarding & Inclusion Team
Advice for Learners (April 2020)

The Mix

www.themix.org.uk

If you're under 25 you can talk to The Mix for free on the phone, by email or on their webchat. You can also use their phone counselling service or get more information on support services you might need. Freephone: 0808 808 4994 (1pm-11pm daily)