

Online Wellbeing



Why is it important to look after your wellbeing online?:

The internet is amazing, and there's a lot of incredible ways in which it can improve your life. However, for all the good it can do, it can give you an equal measure of hurt to your wellbeing. Below are a few things you should be aware of to avoid getting hurt whilst you're on the web.

Social Media and online reputation:

Popular social media at the moment are Instagram, Snapchat, and Tik Tok. These are sites which help you socialise with other people. They're great for keeping in touch, but they are also the main causes of harm to wellbeing online. One such way is through online reputation. Some people take posting on social media very seriously, to the extent that for some people it can become their job i.e. influencers. However, sometimes the pressure to get the most likes, views or hearts can stress people out. It's not uncommon for people to take 20-100 of the same photo until they find "perfection". This doesn't need to be the case, your online reputation is not worth your emotional wellbeing and if you are struggling you should try to step away from posting for awhile.

Cyberbullying:

Some people like emotionally hurting or upsetting others, and some people prefer to use the safety of the internet to pursue this cruel passion. All bullying is bad, but cyberbullying allows victims to never escape or find sanctuary from their harassers. The other big danger is that one small attack can spread far and wide in a matter of moments. If you are being cyber bullied, talk to someone. Use the connections at the bottom to give you ideas as to who you can talk to. Collect evidence of the bullying when you can - a lot of bullies will try to cover their tracks. Some may use fake accounts to hide their identity, still collect the evidence.

Online Grooming

Always be aware of strangers online, especially if they're overly friendly to you. They may offer to buy you things or send you money in an effort to later try to pressure you do something you don't feel comfortable with. Try to avoid talking with strangers, and never except gifts from them. Certainly never feel pressure to something you don't want to do online for them. Tell someone instead. Be aware that some groomers will use fake accounts, including of well-known people, to make you feel more comfortable talking to them.

Online Privacy:

This is particularly important for sites where a lot of your personal data is store e.g. social media. You should make sure you know who can access the things that you put on each site you use. This can be changed by changing the privacy settings for each website. Most social media sites automatically set you to public settings, which means anyone in the world can see what you post and sometimes your personal details. This allows for dangerous people to have easier access to your real life. Also you public data can be sold by companies which can use that information to target you with marketing.

Addiction:

Being online is designed to be addictive. Our phones constantly notify us of even the smallest actions so we feel a sense of satisfaction each time we look at it. You should do your best to avoid being online constantly. To do this, you should charge your phone not in your bedroom at night; Turn off your notifications; and turn off wi-fi/network internet when you're not using your phone. If you can't stop thinking about being online, feel angry when someone stops you, or it stops you doing other things in your life, it's likely that you're addicted.

Pictures of yourself and others:

Do not take pictures of yourself in either your underwear or naked. Do not ask anyone to send you a picture of them in their underwear or naked. If someone is pressuring you to do so, you should immediately tell someone who can help. Pictures of anyone under the age of 18 naked or in their underwear is illegal, even if its for your eyes only. Sharing this sort of content is also terrible for your mental health. It can lead to you questioning your own body image or be used to bully you, especially if it goes viral. You will never be certain who has or hasn't seen it, or may use it as blackmail. Contrary to popular belief, not everyone sends pictures of themselves, so don't let someone think that they do or that it's okay.

Talk to someone that you can trust:

If you are worried or uncomfortable with anything happening to you online and you need some support there is lots of information and help available for you

Helplines and services available:

Samaritans www.samaritans.org Freephone (UK and Republic of Ireland): 116 123 (24 hours)

Childline www.childline.org.uk Freephone 24h helpline: 0800 1111

Kooth: Free, safe and anonymous online support for young people www.kooth.com

Shout: Free 24/7 text service for anyone in crisis www.giveusashout.org Text 85258

The Mix: Free information and support for under 25s in the UK 0808 808 4994 www.themix.org.uk