



Signposting and Safeguarding

The Guide to Responsibly Sharing Stories

A dark blue background with a white square in the top-left corner. A thick purple vertical line runs down the left side. A thick purple horizontal line runs across the top. A solid purple circle is positioned in the lower-left area, with a white outline of a circle overlapping its top-left edge.

MAIN TOPICS

What is signposting and safeguarding?

Why is it important to signpost and
safeguard?

How can people be more responsible
when sharing a story?



***“Safeguarding the rights of others is the most noble and beautiful end of a human being”
— Khalil Gibran***



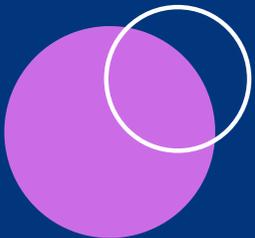


***HOW DO WE DEFINE
SIGNPOSTING AND
SAFEGUARDING?***

SIGNPOSTING

To signpost simply means to point others in the right direction.

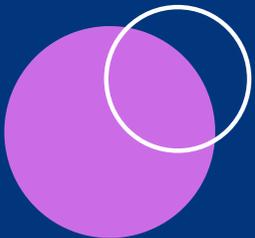
An example would be adding helplines and supportive charities to your post. Pointing others in the direction of help on related incidents.



SAFEGUARDING

To safeguard means to protect from harm or damage with an appropriate measure.

There are many ways we must safeguard when using social media in particular, over many different subject matters.



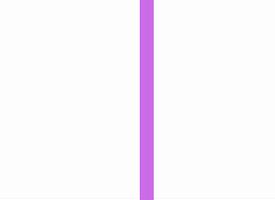


***WHY IS IT IMPORTANT
TO SAFEGUARD AND
SIGNPOST CONTENT
APPROPRIATELY?***



“After a traumatic experience, the human system of self-preservation seems to go onto permanent alert, as if the danger might return at any moment.” — Judith Lewis Herman





AROUND 1 IN 3 ADULTS IN
ENGLAND REPORT HAVING
EXPERIENCED AT LEAST ONE
TRAUMATIC EVENT.

A few examples include:

SERIOUS ILLNESS

ROAD ACCIDENTS

PROLONGED ABUSE

DEATH

DEBT

NATURAL DISASTERS

MURDER

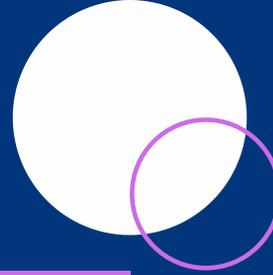
ADDICTION

GLOBAL CRISIS

VIOLENT CRIMES

MISCARRIAGE

EATING DISORDERS

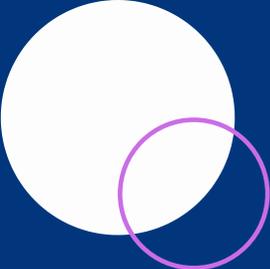


Everyone is entitled to voice their opinions and share their stories with others.

However, when doing so, it is important to remember that people reading these stories freely interpret the content and the words used, based on their own temperament (individual differences in behaviour) and personal experiences.

So, when sharing sensitive material, you should ask yourself ...

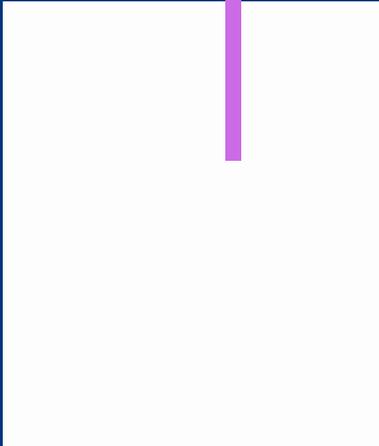
How may my words affect that person?



If you think the content you are sharing may be addressing an sensitive subject and/or may trigger another persons personal trauma or previous distressing experience, you should consider:

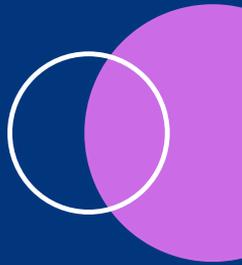
a) Alerting the reader/listener of the type of content and the style of writing that may be particularly delicate or sensitive.

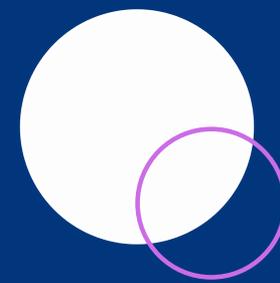
b) Signposting the reader/listener to relevant charities and support networks available that may be helpful if someone is affected by the issues raised.



70% of adults experience at least one traumatic event in their lifetime

20% of people who experience a traumatic event will develop PTSD





Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

"A psychiatric/anxiety disorder caused by very stressful, frightening or distressing events.

www.nhs.uk

PTSD can be immediate following an experience of a disturbing or a distressing event, but it can also occur weeks, months or even years later.

Internal (thoughts and feelings) and external (environment or situation) events can trigger symptoms of PTSD.

'22% of people are significantly effected by social media content, increasing reported

symptoms of PTSD.' *British Psychological Society*



***HOW CAN YOU BE
MORE RESPONSIBLE
WHEN SHARING?***



1.

ADD IN A TRIGGER/CONTENT WARNING AT THE BEGINNING

A trigger/content warning is a statement at the start of a piece of writing, video, etc. alerting the reader or viewer to the fact that it contains potentially distressing material.

Adding a TW/CW allows people to decide if they would like to continue reading the post or not.



WHEN ADDING A TRIGGER WARNING TO A POST IT
DOESN'T HAVE TO BE VERY LONG.
IT CAN BE AS SIMPLE AS:

TRIGGER WARNING:DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

OR EVEN:

TW:DV

THIS WILL INFORM THE PERSON WHAT IS INCLUDED
IN THE STORY AND GIVES THEM THE CHOICE OF
WHETHER THEY WANT TO CONTINUE READING.





IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

**Where you are
on your own
journey may not
be where
everyone else is
on theirs.**





2.

TRY TO AVOID EMOTIVE, DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE

If someone is going through, or has been through something similar, using this kind of language brings a person into the story and may cause them stress and upset.

Descriptive and emotive language is used by fiction authors in order to captivate and bring the reader into the story. In stories of traumatic events, this can be very overwhelming.

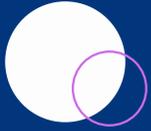


CASE STUDY

Sonia, 35

Sonia was in an abusive relationship for years. Her partner was both physically and emotionally abusive. It took everything she had to escape that relationship and start her life again.

Recently she was reading through one of her social media platforms and came across a Domestic Violence related story with lines such as "As I quivered on the floor" and "This was the moment, it had finally come, he was going to kill me". This post contained no trigger warning or information regarding support charities or helplines, and it sent Sonia spinning into a very dark place. This triggered a response in her that left her debilitated for the day with nightmares continuing for weeks afterwards.



IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

The events are not fiction, they are reality and some people are still living that reality.





3.

MAKE SURE TO USE ACCURATE INFORMATION AND EVIDENCE

The use of inaccurate or false evidence can misinform people and persuade others to take on distorted views. It may also belittle other people's experiences by using false or exaggerated evidence.

'Fake news' exploits fear and uncertainty and can be detrimental if interpreted in the wrong or taken literally.

An example could be "The doctors discharged me and didn't care about me at all". There may be several reasons for being discharged and sharing a false reason could cause someone not to seek help through fear of rejection or embarrassment which can be detrimental.



4.

BE CAREFUL NOT TO SENSATIONALISE

Sensationalism is the presentation of facts or stories in a way that is intended to produce strong feelings of shock, anger, or excitement, or the use of sensational language, etc, to arouse an intense emotional response.

Sensationalising an event or situation can be very dangerous and triggering for people, particularly provoking feelings of distress and emotional or psychological pain.

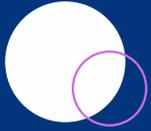


5.

NEVER MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

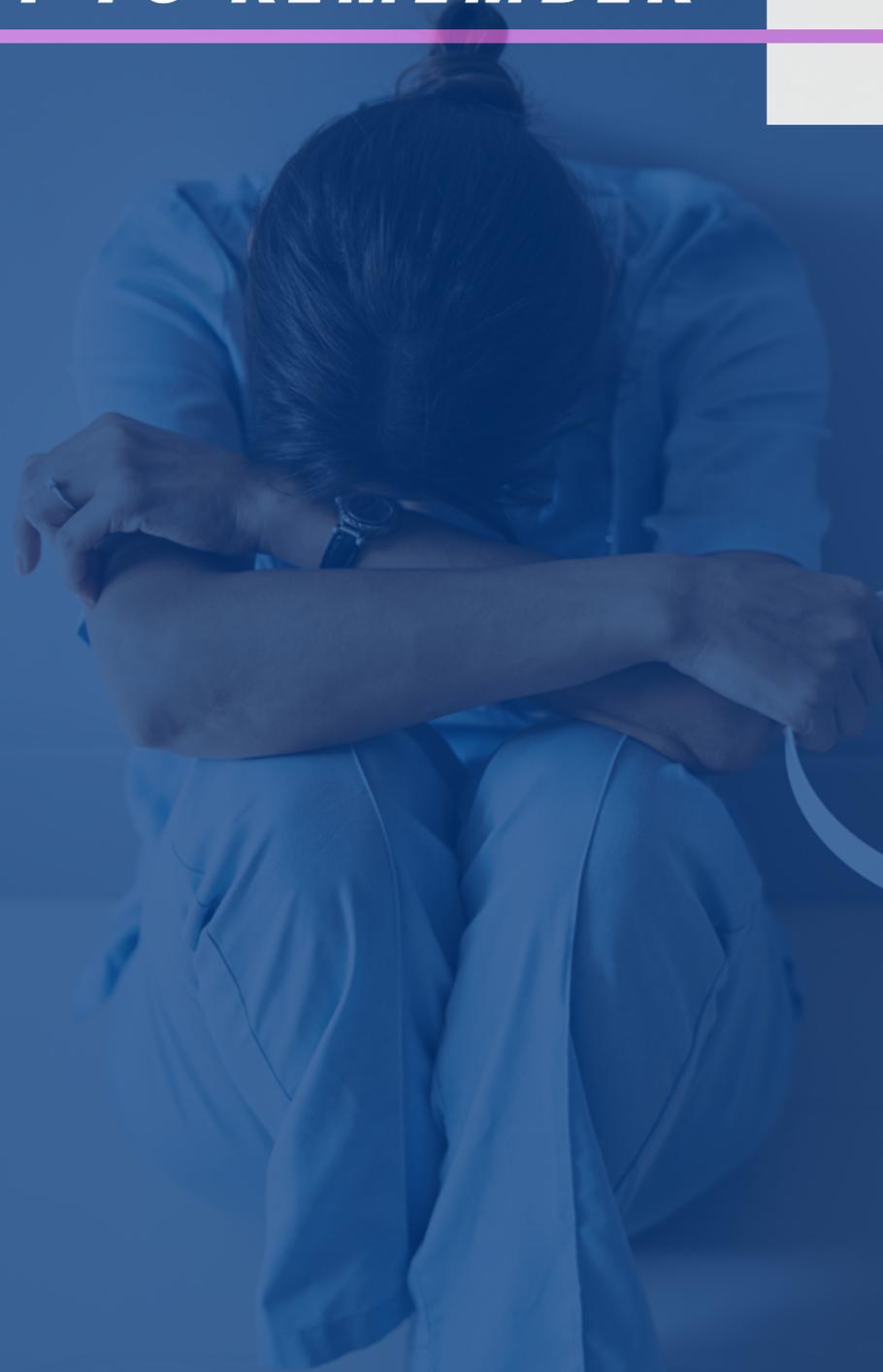
If a story isn't necessarily your story, never make assumptions.

For example, if there has been a suicide and you do not know factual details, do not lead a conversation based on assumptions about the details, this can lead to potentially dangerous ideas or trigger others.



IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

Everyone deals with situations/events differently. You should never make assumptions of how someone is coping based on how you might feel in their situation.





6.

USE AS FEW DETAILS ABOUT THE EVENT AS YOU CAN

Including emotional details in a recall of an event influences the reader or listener to 'experience' the event as opposed to objectively consuming it, which can trigger emotional or psychological responses to the material.

Over-describing an incident can also unintentionally encourage people to compare and overthink their personal situation which can cause distress and uncertainty.



IN THE 5 MONTHS FOLLOWING ROBIN WILLIAMS SUICIDE IN 2014, THERE WERE 1,841 MORE SUICIDE DEATHS IN THE USA COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

THATS A RISE OF 9.85%.

THE REASON COULD BE THAT THE TERRIBLE INCIDENT, AND ALL OF THE DETAILS, WERE SHARED ALL OVER THE TV, RADIO AND SOCIAL MEDIA... FOR EVERYONE TO SEE AND HEAR.





ALWAYS ASK YOURSELF

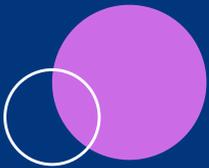
Is it true?

Is it kind?

Is it necessary?

Is it helpful?

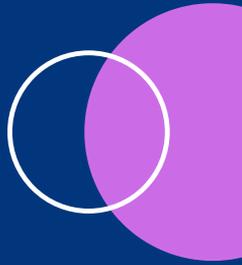
Quote - Bernard Meltzer



1 in 5 people have suicidal thoughts.

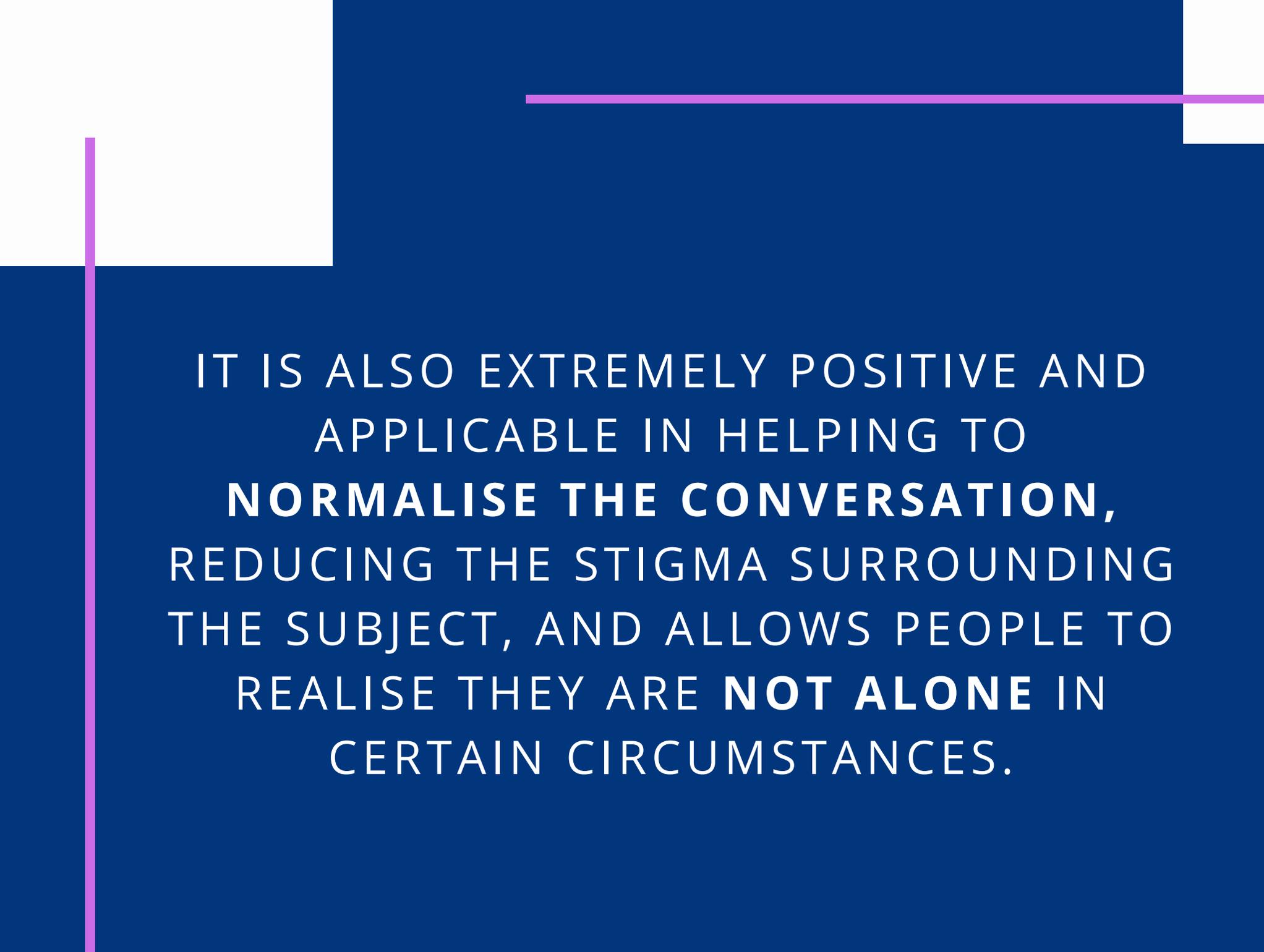
1 in 14 people self-harm.

1 in 15 people attempt suicide.



PLEASE NOTE: THIS GUIDE IS NOT DISCOURAGING
ANYONE FROM SHARING THEIR PERSONAL
EXPERIENCE OR SITUATION.

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT OPENING UP
AND SHARING YOUR OWN STORY IS
PART OF THE HEALING PROCESS AND
HAS BEEN PROVEN TO HELP IN
RECOVERY.



IT IS ALSO EXTREMELY POSITIVE AND
APPLICABLE IN HELPING TO
NORMALISE THE CONVERSATION,
REDUCING THE STIGMA SURROUNDING
THE SUBJECT, AND ALLOWS PEOPLE TO
REALISE THEY ARE **NOT ALONE** IN
CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.

FINAL NOTE

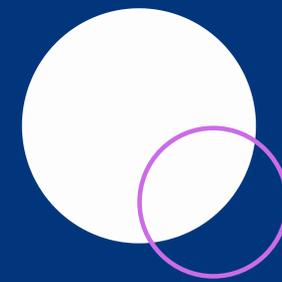


The aim of this guide is to emphasise the importance of sharing personal and sensitive stories with others in the most appropriate way. This includes signposting readers to the appropriate support, as well as implementing safeguarding measures to ensure all people reading or hearing the story are protected, and any triggering or distressing materials that may cause adverse reactions are controlled for.

The act of sharing past experiences is very courageous and empowering, enhancing resilience and mental strength for healing and coping with distressing or triggering events.

It also shows others that they are not alone and this can be extremely encouraging and supportive. However it is crucial that we consider the consequences of what we write and how other people may react to the content that we produce.

Ultimately, you would not want to trigger or initiate someone else's pain or suffering who might have been through a similar experience. So before you press share, always ask yourself; is it true, is it kind, is it necessary, is it helpful?



Charities and Helplines

If you are concerned for yourself or someone else, these are just a selection of some of the amazing charities providing free support.

Samaritans - Free 24/7 service in the UK : **Call 116 123**

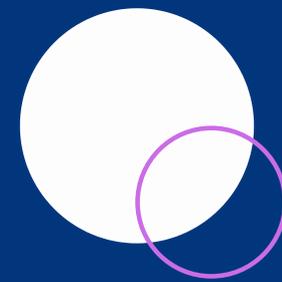
Text 'SHOUT' to 85258 for Free Support 24/7 in the UK

ProjectExtreme **Text LEV to 741741** in the USA.

United for Global Mental Health - <https://unitedgmh.org/>

MIND - <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

World Federation for Mental Health - <https://wfmh.global/>



Mobile Apps

If you are concerned for yourself or someone else, these are just a selection of some of the amazing charities providing free support.

Beautiful Mood - a journaling app that beautifully displays the colours of your moods

Calm Harm - developed for teenage mental health charity stem4

Stay Alive - a pocket suicide prevention resource for the UK

Clear Fear - learning to breathe, relax and be mindful in response to threat



WELLITY

Contact us at hello@wellityglobal.com

