

# Mental Health Matters

## What can I do to keep myself safe online?

Just like in the offline world, when you're online it's important to think about your privacy and how to keep yourself safe. If you're online for support with your mental health, you may also need to think about a few additional things.

Here are some tips to consider:

- **Check your privacy settings.** Just because a site requires you to log in, this doesn't necessarily mean that your profile is entirely private – some parts might still be shown publicly.
- **Think about who will see what you share.** For many people, sharing their feelings online can be helpful during a difficult time. However, some people find that when they are feeling better, they regret how much they shared, or who they shared this with.
- **Protect your personal details.** What you share online can affect both your privacy and the privacy of others, so it's important to think carefully about what you post. Never post personal details online, like your address or telephone number.
- **Protect yourself from excessive online spending.** It's very easy to spend money online, and if you are feeling unwell, this can be a quick way to make yourself feel better. Impulsive decisions about money can also be an issue during a period of [mania or hypomania](#). This can lead to spending that can leave you in lots of debt.
- **Stranger danger.** Never talk or meet up with someone you don't know.
- **Dealing with triggering content.** If you come across something that upsets you, close the screen or scroll quickly past it. You might even want to turn off your computer or mobile device and take a break.
- **Try to avoid online self-diagnosis.** Talking to a GP is the first step in exploring what treatment and support options might work best for you.
- **Use secure passwords.**
- **Be extra careful with sexually explicit content.** It's possible that someone could use it to try to harm you in the future. Although this does not happen often, it is something to keep in mind before you share sexually explicit content with anyone – even privately. If you find yourself the victim of blackmail because of sexually explicit content, report this to the police as soon as you can. You can also contact [Victim Support](#) 24/7 on [08 08 16 89 111](#).

