SAFE &

2ND EDITION
REVISED MARCH 2022

LOVED

H2
YO

PICKLES

STRONG

THE LGBTQ+ GUIDE TO FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM

∞ Meta   acon   Black Rainbow   MINUS18   TP▷   twenty10 GLCS

KEEPING SOCIAL MEDIA A POSITIVE & SAFE PLACE

INTRODUCTION FROM OUR PARTNERS

BLACK RAINBOW

Now in our 9th year, Black Rainbow has grown from a mechanism to combat any isolation and loneliness experienced by members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQA+SB community.

From our humble online beginnings, we have learnt how valuable platforms like Facebook and Instagram can be as tools of elevation, celebration, education, and inclusion. What is most important is keeping the social media experience of our communities safe for all. Since 2021, our following on Instagram and Facebook has increased by over 6K followers. Feedback from our community is that we have achieved this by sensitively curating a safe and welcoming space for all to engage.

Facebook and Instagram can be an excellent place for minorities, such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQA+SB community, to find belonging, connection, support, education, and information.

We hope that our ongoing participation in this guide contributes to making Facebook and Instagram more accessible for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQA+SB community and feel welcomed when doing so.

We will continue to use our reach to elevate and spotlight members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQA+SB community and to educate and inform everyday Australians on who we are.

To find out more about us, what we do and our future plans, go to **blackrainbow.org.au**. You can download our free Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQA+SB there as well.

You can also find us via the Black Rainbow Facebook page and at **@blackrainbowaus** on Instagram.

Dameyon Bonson
Founder, Black Rainbow

ACON

Social media can play an important role in our lives. It offers a place for self-expression, community connection, acceptance and belonging. This is often profoundly true for people of diverse sexualities and genders, many of whom find communities through platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Social media transcends geographical boundaries. No matter where you are, no matter what city, suburb or country town, social media is a great place to connect with our inclusive and diverse communities.

But social media is not without its downsides. While there may be affirming content and conversations, it can also be a source of negativity and hostility about who we are and how we love, sometimes from within our own communities, which can have detrimental impacts on our health and wellbeing.

As Australia's largest organisation specialising in HIV and the health of sexuality and gender diverse communities, we at ACON want to make sure the social media experiences of people in our communities is positive. That's why we worked with Facebook and Instagram to develop this resource to support your wellbeing and to help you stay safe, to practice and express self-care online.

Facebook and Instagram provide great opportunities for our communities to connect with and support each other, exchange ideas, access resources and share information. We hope this guide helps in making your online experience enriching and empowering.

If you or someone you know in NSW needs support, contact ACON on **(02) 9206 2000** or visit **acon.org.au**

You can also contact the QLife National Peer Support service on **1800 184 527** or online at **qlife.org.au**

Nicolas Parkhill
CEO, ACON

TRANS PRIDE AUSTRALIA

Trans and gender diverse people understand the impacts of stigma, discrimination, intimidation and bullying, both online and in real life. No one deserves to be treated disrespectfully.

The Safe and Strong Guide is a useful tool to help community know what features are available for them to be able to control who they engage with online and how they want to engage.

Our trans communities are strong and resilient. Social media forms a critical role in connecting us for social and emotional support and this resource will help trans communities maintain safety online.

Joël Murray
Deputy President & Public Officer, Trans Pride Australia

MINUS18

If there's anyone that knows the importance of social media and online spaces, it's Minus18 and our community – LGBTQIA+ young people and adults alike. Social media is an amazing, tangible way to find resources, support and a sense of community, particularly if you aren't finding that support or social connection in person.

This was especially true when adapting to life during COVID-19 – a time of social isolation, with a profound impact on mental health and wellbeing. We completely reimagined our life-affirming, identity-celebrating youth events for a digital world, including our Melbourne and Sydney Queer Formals. In all, we held 20 digital events with over 7,000 attendees from all over Australia.

Although we love celebrating queer identities and fostering social connection in person, our social media feeds meant that LGBTQIA+ young people are able to celebrate each other and make friends, even from afar. Digital events also meant that regional and rural LGBTQIA+ youth are able to attend our life-affirming events no matter their location, and that thousands of young people can access an LGBTQIA+ community for the very first time – even if they aren't "out", or supported by their families.

Making new friends, accessing resources, discovering that you're supported by a whole community – that's life-changing stuff. We can see it firsthand, at our digital events; in our Instagram comments; in our Minus18 Teens Facebook group; in the popularity of our online resources and articles. Social media and online communities are places where anyone can feel supported, seen and loved.

If you're an LGBTQIA+ young person, you can join our Minus18 Teens group on Facebook.

You can also check out our upcoming events and all our resources via Instagram.

If you're an ally, family member, or a supporter, check out **minus18.org.au** for more about our life-changing work.

TWENTY10

In 2022, Twenty10 is celebrating 40 years of providing safer spaces for young LGBTIQA+ people to be themselves – we are officially old! We do this in our physical spaces but know it is equally important to make sure we do this in our digital spaces.

Twenty10 offer weekly dedicated safer space online hangOUTS alongside our creative and skill sharing programs, we are recommencing our online parent and carers group and our leading educational program PRISM and all of our inclusivity trainings for schools, services, workplaces and any ally who wants to learn more – are all available digitally.

Now, excitingly, that our in-person services are returning – Facebook and Instagram are where we share all our updated news and info: **@twenty10glcs** and **twenty10.org.au** Get in touch!

Jain Moralee
Co Executive Director, Twenty10

CONTENTS

CUB SPORT
@cubsport

"Every LGBTQI creator is helping someone on their own journey just by being visible so we're all contributing to something bigger together. Never question the impact of your voice!"

PROTECT YOUR SPACE

You're in control of who sees your posts on Facebook and Instagram, and you can choose your level of openess.

By switching to a private account on Instagram, you can choose who follows you and who sees the posts you share. It's also quick and easy to check the privacy of your Facebook account, and control who sees your posts.

HOW TO

From your Instagram profile page, access your **Settings** menu, then select **Privacy**. Scroll to **Private Account** and move the slider to the right. The slider will turn blue once the account is private.

Privacy Checkup guides you through some of your privacy and security settings, so you can review your choices to help make sure that you're sharing with who you want. To access this feature, click the ••• button on your Facebook profile, and select View Privacy Shortcuts.

BE SELECTIVE ABOUT SHARING

If you're excited to share something, but only want a select group of friends or followers to see, share it through **Direct** or **Close Friends** on Instagram, or use the controls on Facebook to control who sees your post.

HOW TO

Instead of the main upload tool, click on the **Instagram Direct** or **Messenger** icon in the top right corner and choose which specific people will receive your photo or video. With **Stories**, you can select individual followers or groups to share with, and you can identify a group of **Close Friends** to share any Story with instead of posting publicly.

To set up your **Close Friends** list, click on the menu button in the top-right of your profile, and choose **Close Friends**. You can view and edit the people in your **Close Friends** list here.

You can use the **Audience Selector** tool most places you share status updates, photos and other things you post. Click the drop-down menu above the **Post** button and select who you want to share something with.

Options for Audiences include:
- Public
- Friends
- Friends Except (to ensure specific people do not view your post)
- Specific Friends (to choose a smaller group of people to view your post)
- Only Me

EMMA HORN
@emmahornnn

"Honestly Instagram for me, especially this last year has given me the most beautiful, understanding and colourful support network I've really ever had. I genuinely feel safer on this platform than any other and it helps big time that I can easily filter out unwanted messages, comments and also interact with my followers on IG Stories to see how they're feeling in the space as well. I'm very grateful to have such a strong LGBTQ+ friendly space."

MUTE THE NOISE

It's okay if you need a break from someone you follow, on Instagram you can use **Mute** to hide someone's posts. They won't be notified you've muted them, and you can simply unmute them when you want to see what they're up to again.

On Facebook, you can **Snooze** a person, group or page to see less of them in your Newsfeed. Snoozing a person, Page or group prevents you from seeing their posts in your News Feed for 30 days.

To **Mute** someone, tap the ••• menu in the corner of that person's post. You can choose whether to mute feed posts, story posts, or both.

To **Snooze** someone, click to ••• on the top-right of one of their posts, and select **Snooze**. The person, Page or group you've snoozed won't know that they've been snoozed. You can un-Snooze them at any time before the 30 days is up.

TIPS TO DISCUSS MUTING OR UNFOLLOWING SOMEONE
FROM ACON

It's ok to need space online and to seek digital distance from friends, particularly if you're not finding joy or connection together. The impact of the pandemic means we may have less energy than we used to for people online, and that's okay.

Making sure you have energy for yourself is important too. If you decide it's time to de-friend or unfollow someone, it might be a good idea to consider how you'll respond if they talk to you about it. Good communication means knowing and caring for your own boundaries.

If someone does ask you, consider saying something like this:

"I've been finding social media a bit too busy lately so wanted to follow people I am closer to in real life"

This won't always go down well but communicating honestly and with love can often protect us, and them, from holding all that loss and anxiety alone.

Building positive and respectful relationships online can take work, counselling support can be helpful in strengthening communication skills.

YOUR TIME IS PRECIOUS

Use the new **Take A Break** tool on Instagram and other features on our platforms to manage how you spend your time online and get tips on how to unwind.

HOW TO

In the Instagram **Settings** menu, tap on **Your Activity**. Tap **Set a reminder to take breaks** to set the time you want to spend on Instagram before getting a notification to take a break. You can also view how much time you're spending on Instagram and mute notifications when you don't want to be bothered.

On the Facebook App, go into your **Settings & Privacy** menu and then select **Your Time on Facebook**. You can then view how much time you're spending on Facebook, set daily reminders to limit the time you spend online, and mute notifications when you don't want to be bothered.

If you need to log out of your account to take a break, you can do so in the **Settings** menu on Facebook and Instagram*

BRANDON SCOTT
@itsbybrandon

"Curate your space with intention. There is a pattern amongst the experiences we endure within the LGBTQIA+ community, living within toxic spaces that shame our existence, naturally we adapt our behaviours, dull ourselves to lessen these experiences. Instagram has allowed us to network and bond with our communities globally. We can support and inspire each other to be authentically ourselves and celebrate that together within our curated space. Fill your space with people who lift you up, we grow stronger together."

TIPS FOR CREATING POSITIVE SPACES ONLINE
FROM BLACK RAINBOW

When you visit Black Rainbow on Facebook or Instagram, you'll notice that we are free of racism and homophobia. Very rarely do we even discuss these two things on there. Our reason for this is simple. As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQA+SB people, we encounter these harmful experiences in our day-to-day lives. So we have chosen to not bring them to our online community. As a result, our online spaces are welcoming, more inclusive, respectful, and loving.

Here are some tips from experiences we have learnt from over the years. We hope they can assist you if you in creating a Page or a Group on Facebook or an account on Instagram, or all three.

TIPS

- It's good to start off with having two or more administrators of the accounts. This way, you have others that can assist with to moderating discussion.

- For Groups, identify your membership. Is it just Indigenous LGBTIQ+ only, all of the LGBTIQ+ community, or for everyone? Choose whether the group is private or public.

- Have a set of rules that members must abide by.

- There may be disagreements between members, but if the conversation becomes heated, let the participants know to cool things down.

- Suppose a person is engaging in harmful and hurtful behaviour. In that case, ask them to refrain and let them know that you will be deleting their comments (deleting the comments is a way of removing negativity from your Page or Group).

- If they persist, block.

BLACK RAINBOW
@blackrainbowaus

"When you visit Black Rainbow on Facebook or Instagram, you'll notice that we are free of racism and homophobia. Very rarely do we even discuss these two things on there. Our reason for this is simple. As Indigenous LGBTIQ+ people, we encounter these negative and harmful experiences in our day-to-day lives, so we have chosen to not bring them to our online community. As a result, our online spaces are welcoming, more inclusive, respectful and loving."

Dameyon Bonson (@dameyon)
Founder, Black Rainbow

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

To help protect people when they experience or anticipate a rush of comments and DMs, we've introduced **Limits**: a feature that will automatically hide comments and DM requests from people who don't follow you, or who only recently followed you. Limits allows you to hear from your long-standing followers, while limiting contact from people who might only be coming to your account to target you.

HOW TO

Go to your **Settings** and tap **Privacy**. Then choose **Limits**.

OWN YOUR FEED

If someone you follow makes you feel bad about yourself, it may be time to unfollow or unfriend them.

No notification is sent when you unfollow or unfriend someone. Think of it as a small but powerful way to practice self-care.

On Facebook, you can also select the kinds of posts you want to see on your Newsfeed.

HOW TO

On Instagram, go to the profile of the person you'd like to unfollow and tap **Unfollow**.

Click the ≡ button on your Facebook app and choose **Settings**. Select **News Feed Preferences** from this menu. You can then prioritize whose posts you see first and make posts from people or Pages appear at the top of your News Feed.

You can also **Unfollow** a person, Page or Group, and manage your **Snooze** settings. When you unfriend someone, it means that activities (pictures, updates, posts) that you set to the **Friends** audience will no longer be seen by that person.

Additionally, their activities will not show up on your News Feed. However, they will still be able to see whatever is public on your profile, including any activities you post with a **Public** audience, posts made by mutual friends to your Timeline, and any comments that you post on a mutual friend's Timeline.

They can also re-request you as a friend.
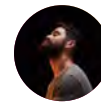
JEFF VAN DER ZANDT
@jjzandt

"To ensure my experience on Instagram is a positive one I follow accounts of people who I have real life personal connections with, but also things like art and comedy and education. It's important to have the right balance, and to not get caught up in comparing your life to what you see in your feed."

BLOCK NEGATIVITY

If someone is negatively impacting your experience, you can **Block** them. When you block someone, they're never notified and they can no longer view your posts or search for your account. You can unblock them at any time.

If you're not comfortable blocking someone on Instagram, you can now **Restrict** them — which protects your account from unwanted interactions without making the targeted person aware. Once you restrict someone, comments from that person will only be visible to that person.

HOW TO

Tap ••• on their profile, then tap **Block**.

You can restrict someone by tapping ••• on their profile, and then tapping **Restrict**.

Click the downward arrow ▼ at the top-right of any Facebook page. Select **Blocking** and in the **Block Users** section, enter the name of the person you want to block and click **Block**. You can also go to the person's profile and select **Block** from the ••• menu in the bottom right of their cover photo.

When you block a person, they will not be able to view your Timeline activity, message or tag you, or send you another friend request (blocking automatically unfriends the person). You will also not be able to see their activity. They will still be able to see your public information and activity within apps or groups.

In Messenger, you can also tap on a message to **Ignore** the conversation. This disables notifications and moves the conversation from your inbox to your Filtered Messages folder. You can read messages in the conversation without the sender seeing if they've been read. The sender will not be aware that you have chosen to **Ignore** their messages.

ROSHAN NAUSAD
@desiboy.com.au

"One of the things I love about my followers is that they are so vocal about self-expression and bringing awareness and attention to issues within the south Asian community and the LGBTQIA+ community. There is no place on my profile for negative and horrible people. I manage them by blocking them and deleting their comments, simple as that."

BE YOURSELF

Because Facebook and Instagram are used for different purposes, we take different approaches to names. On Instagram, you can choose whatever name you like, and use multiple accounts to express yourself freely.

Because Facebook is used to connect with family and friends, we ask that people to use the name that they are known by in the community. This helps keep the Facebook community safe from impersonation, scams and phishing.

But we know it's important to make sure Facebook's authentic name policy works for everyone, and that you are affirmed for who you are and the name you use in everyday life.

That's why you can now provide additional context on why you are using a particular name, and we have changed the ID verification experience to be simpler, more compassionate, and to broaden the types of ID that can be used.

HOW TO

If you're asked to verify your name, you can select **I have a special circumstance** to provide more information about why you are using that name.

There is an extensive list of ID options available, including a piece of mail, a paystub, a library card, and many more.

To view the full list visit:
facebook.com/help/159096464162185

ACCESS ALL AREAS

Facebook is committed to creating a great experience for all people. If you are blind, vision-impaired, or hearing-impaired, we've built a new, stronger foundation for accessibility so you can enjoy an even better experience on Facebook and Instagram.

HOW TO

We've added **better descriptions** for more on-screen elements - like buttons and checkboxes - and we revamped all of the Heading tags, allowing people using screen readers to better navigate and understand a page's structure. We also have closed captions for video content on Facebook Watch and Live.

For more tools and information visit: **fb.com/accessibility**

Automatic closed captions are available in a range of languages on IGTV videos, and we encourage the inclusion of image descriptions on Instagram posts with an automatic option to include this whenever you post using **Advanced Settings**.

For more tools and information visit: **help.instagram.com**

YOU'RE IN CONTROL

Instagram and Facebook have a range of controls which allow you to choose who can comment on your posts, tag you, and mention you.

HOW TO

Select **Comments** in the **Privacy** option under **Settings** — there you can choose to **Allow Comments From**: 1) Everyone, 2) People You Follow and Your Followers, 3) just the People You Follow, or 4) Your Followers. You can also turn off comments entirely from your posts.

Control who can tag and mention you in the **Settings** menu. Go to **Privacy** then select **Tags** or **Mentions** and choose from 1) Everyone, 2) People You Follow, or 3) No One. You can also turn on the ability to manually approve all tags.

Using your **Privacy** settings, you can choose to approve all tags before they appear on your Timeline, limit the audience of posts that you are tagged in, and turn off the **Tag Suggestions** feature. You can also remove tags of yourself, although removing a tag or not approving a tag does not remove the post or photo from Facebook. Those options only allow you to control what shows up on your own Timeline.

If you are concerned about your privacy, you can use Facebook's social reporting tool to ask the individuals to remove the photos or posts.

AJ CLEMENTINE
@ajclementine_

"Instagram showed me that I wasn't alone and gave me a whole new family. I protect myself from negativity on Instagram by using Restrict for trolls and anyone that is transphobic or is hateful. I try my best to focus on the positive and uplifting comments and messages so that I don't feel sad about the hate."

ADD
A FILTER

You can also enter which words, phrases, and emojis you find offensive, and any comments containing them will be automatically hidden from you. The person posting won't be notified.

HOW TO

To manually add specific words and phrases you find offensive to be filtered out from your comments, save them in the **Manual Filter** option. The **Offensive Comment** filter is switched on by default.

We also make a **Profanity Filter** available for Facebook Pages, where a select number of words and phrases can be added. This filters out comments on the Page that use these words.

SET THE TONE

You can now pin up to three comments on a post to the top of a thread, helping you to control the tone by highlighting positivity. You can also delete or report comments that are negative or abusive.

HOW TO

You have options on a comment allowing you to **Pin**, **Report**, or **Delete** it.

To delete multiple comments at once on iOS, tap on a comment and then the dotted icon in the top right corner. Select **Manage Comments** and choose up to 25 comments to delete at once. Tap **More Options** to block or restrict accounts in bulk.

To block or restrict accounts on Android, press and hold on a comment, tap the dotted icon and select **Block** or **Restrict**.

LOOK OUT FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are unacceptable, and we encourage you to report problematic content or comments whenever you see them on our platforms so we can remove them.

HOW TO

Tap ••• above the post, tap **Report**, and select **It's Inappropriate** > **Hate speech or symbols**.

Tap ••• at the top of the post, select **Find Support or Report Post** and select the **Hate speech** reason for reporting. Once you've reported something you can check the status of your report from the **Support Inbox**.

If you see a post that makes you worry that someone might hurt themselves, know that you don't have to handle it alone.

Let Instagram or Facebook know about the post and the next time the person opens the app they will see a message connecting them to support resources, such as contacting a local community organization or helpline, talking to friends, or finding additional resources.

It is completely anonymous. They will never know who reported their post. You are not telling on someone; you are helping them access support and resources.

HOW TO

Tap ••• above the post, tap **Report**, and select **It's Inappropriate** > **Self injury**.

Tap ••• at the top of the post, select **Find Support or Report Post** and select the **Hate speech** reason for reporting. Once you've reported something you can check the status of your report from the **Support Inbox**.

FIND YOUR COMMUNITY

One of the most wonderful, life-affirming ways of finding support and improving your wellbeing is connecting to like-minded people and communities. By finding your people! Even online, community makes a huge difference.

HOW TO

📷 Some commonly used hashtags for inspiration include:

#YouAreNotAlone	#LoveWins
#SelfCare	#BeKind
#TransIsBeautiful	#YouMatter
#StandByYourTrans	#AllBodiesAreGoodBodies
#LGBTQIAustralia	#DeadlyProud
#LoveIsLove	#FirstNationsQueer

f Click **Groups** on your Facebook menu to discover some of the popular groups near you, along with suggested groups you may like, and categories to search for groups.

MANAGING A COMMUNITY

If you're an admin or a moderator of a Facebook group, there are some key tips and tricks to ensuring the safety and well-being of your members and their conversations.
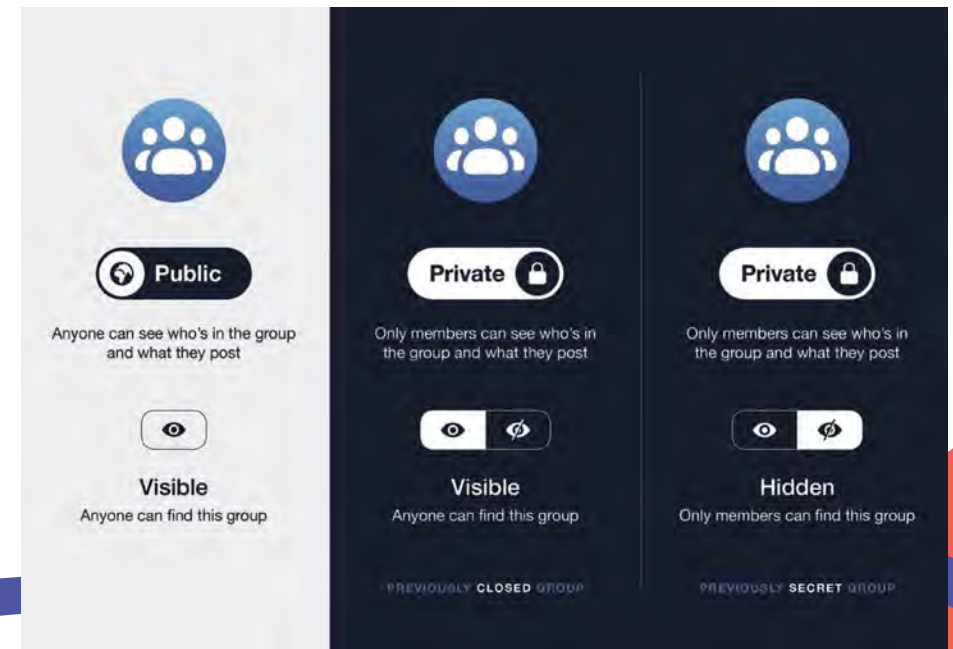
- There are two privacy options for Facebook groups: public and private. If the group is **Public**, anyone can see who's in the group and what they post and comment. If the group is **Private**, only members can see who's in the group and what they post and comment.

- Only group admins can change the privacy of a Facebook group. All members of your group will receive a notification if you change the privacy settings. If your group has over 5,000 members, you can not change it from private to public.

- Group admins can also choose to make their group visible or hidden. **Visible** allows anyone to find the group in search and other places on Facebook. **Hidden** means that only members can find the group in search and other places on Facebook.

- If you're a group admin, you can choose to turn on membership approval for your group. This means admins or moderators will have to approve membership requests before someone can join the group.

- Only group admins can remove or block a member from a group. To do this, select your group and click **Members** in the left menu. Find the member you want to remove and select **Remove from Group** and/or **Block Permanently**. Click to check the box if you'd also like to delete posts, comments and pending member invites from the person you'd like to remove or block.

- As an admin of a group, you can approve posts before they appear in your group. In **Group Settings** click to check the box next to **Post Approval**, then click **Save** at the bottom. You'll get notified when there's pending posts for you to approve (or delete).
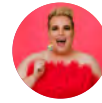
- If any member of the group reports a post, you'll get a notification. This feature lets group members highlight posts for you to review for any reason (example: inappropriate or offensive posts). You can then choose to delete the post, block the member who created the post, or ignore it by removing it from the report queue. To report the post to Facebook, find the post in your group's discussion, click and then select **Report** post. Keep in mind that reports are anonymous. Action will only be taken on a group or a post if this is found to violate Community Guidelines. Each report is evaluated against our Guidelines, and we do not take action simply because a post receives a large volume of reports.

- You can temporarily stop someone from posting or commenting in the group. Click on the **Members** option in your Group, find the person you want to mute and select **Mute Member**. You can select the amount of time you want to prevent the person from posting or commenting in the group. You can also mute someone from a post or comment they made in the group within that post or comment options. When you mute a group member, the next time they visit the group they'll see that their ability to post or comment in the group has been temporarily turned off.

- Select the **Group Quality** option on the left menu of your group, to see actions Facebook has taken to enforce Community Standards in your group. You can view content that was removed from your group for violating Community Standards, potentially violating content (like posts or comments) and misinformation in the group. As an admin, you can take action by clicking **See Details** next to a Community Standards violation to see the violation history of the member who posted that content. You can then click **Take Action** to turn on post approval, mute, remove or block the group member.

- **Group Insights** provide metrics about your group, including member activity and engagement within the group. You can use Group Insights to understand how members engage within your group, see who the most active group members are, learn which posts have the most engagement, and more. To access simply click Group Insights on the left menu of your group.

- For further information and many more tips on managing groups, visit our Help Center at: **facebook.com/help**

UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SETTINGS ON GROUPS

	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
Who can see what members post, comment and share in the group?	Anyone	Current members
Who can see the list of members in the group?	People on Facebook	Current Members
Who can see who the admins and moderators are?	People on Facebook	People on Facebook

Public
Anyone can see who's in the group and what they post

Visible
Anyone can find this group

Private
Only members can see who's in the group and what they post

Visible
Anyone can find this group

PREVIOUSLY CLOSED GROUP

Private
Only members can see who's in the group and what they post

Hidden
Only members can find this group

PREVIOUSLY SECRET GROUP

MATT HEY
@alrighthey

"Personally, I love a block button. Followers aren't everything. Community is. Because I'm so personal with my audience, a lot of people feel they can share their opinions with me, which I love. But sometimes, they give advice on things that overstep a boundary. Sometimes I won't want other people seeing that comment on my post, but I know at heart they're a loyal follower, so Restrict is a great tool. It means other people can't see their comment, but to them, nothing has changed. At the end of the day, my biggest piece of advice is: reflect the haters! Be so glamorous that your fabulousness outshines anything anyone can throw your way."

CONNECTING SAFELY

BY TWENTY10

It can feel super exciting and affirming to connect with new people online. Especially when we meet people who have similar lived experience to us, love the same things that we do and really understand what we are talking about – both when we feel happy and connected, or when we are feeling isolated or maybe not having the best mental health time.

Whilst connecting with people online can be beneficial in this way, it's important to remember that sometimes telling people everything about yourself and sharing really personal information about your life and experience can potentially be risky for you and also potentially triggering for the other person/people.

- Consent applies to online spaces. If you are thinking about sharing something very personal, check in with the person you are chatting to around whether or not they feel comfortable discussing those topics and if they aren't – respect those boundaries.

- Remember these same boundaries for yourself. If a conversation is heading in a direction that you don't feel comfortable with – feel confident to communicate that.

- Facebook and Instagram can be an amazing space to read, watch and learn. If conversations are traversing topics that you don't have knowledge, info or the lived experience of, it's ok to step out of those conversations and make space for those that have that lived experience knowledge or expertise.

- Oversharing can be a thing. Practice checking in with someone around the direction of a conversation

- It can also be really discouraging or anxiety-inducing to share personal information with your new online BFF only to find your connection wane soon after. Online spaces can change really quickly. Don't feel pressured to share everything immediately, but instead when you know and trust others.

- Avoid sharing practical personal information like your address and phone number with people that you don't know in real life.

- Making friends is a process that takes time and sometimes online it can feel very instant. Allow connections with others, groups and communities to develop at a slower pace and evolve into spaces where you can share safely. Also remember that sometimes we want different things from online spaces- some folks love the online world, while others dip in and out.

- If someone reveals information that you feel is outside of your scope to support – communicate this, and refer them to support services that might be able to assist them. Most support services will have Facebook pages and/or Instagram accounts they can DM also.
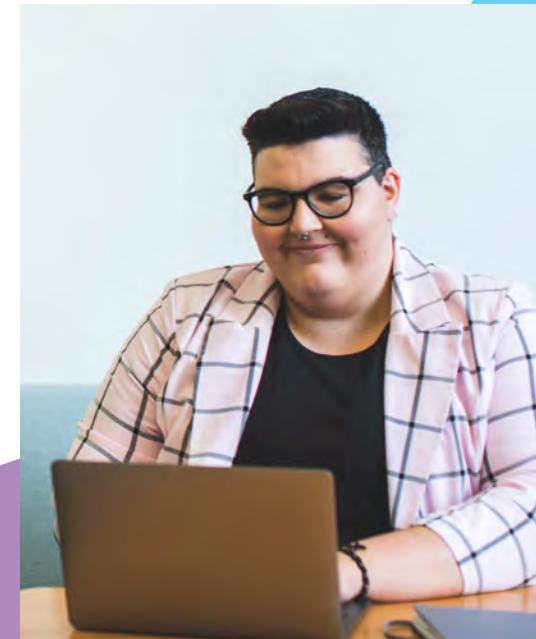
blackrainbow.org.au
acon.org.au
transprideaustralia.org.au
minus18.org.au
twenty10.org.au