SAFE AND STRONG

An LGBTQ+ guide
to Facebook and Instagram

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, in partnership with Trans Pride Australia, 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 www.acon.org.au.

You can also contact the national counselling service QLife on 1800 184 527 or online at www.qlife.org.au.

Nicolas Parkhill
CEO, ACON

TRANS PRIDE AUSTRALIA

The relatively recent opportunity for diverse communities to connect in a private online environment has changed the way many trans and gender diverse (TGD) people support each other, exchange resources and information, debate, share some laughs, challenges and triumphs and ultimately gain autonomy over our bodies and lives.

Trans Pride Australia's (TPA) roots are firmly planted in our social media groups. With a Facebook Page and three Facebook Groups that target specific parts of our community, we're able to provide social connection and support for TGD people and loved ones by TGD people. On top of our engaged online community TPA creates IRL experiences, such as social meet-ups, public events, workshops and our annual entry in the Sydney Mardi Gras parade. We promote all these events through our social platforms to reach as many people in our community as possible.

Today we have a good set of guidelines to ensure our groups are safe and positive places, but we have to admit over the past five years our moderating learning curve was almost vertical. As our groups have grown beyond our expectations, so too have the demands on our volunteer admins—both from our member base and from the wider community. But it's these demands that have propelled many of our admins into discovering their leadership capabilities, becoming strong community role models, and creating a greater range of trans and gender diverse voices in the wider community.

When Facebook and Instagram approached us about collaborating on this resource, alongside our friends at ACON, we immediately saw the value in not only providing key info for our members and community to stay safe, engaged and supported online—but also to provide shortcuts to ensure the learning curve for other grass roots organisations is a little less steep.

We hope you learn a thing or two—and if we don't know you yet, we look forward to meeting you online.

If you're trans or gender diverse join the Trans Pride Australia Facebook group. If you're a family member, friend or ally join the Trans Pride Australia Allies Facebook group. If you're a partner of a TGD person join the Trans Pride Australia Partners Facebook group. To keep up to date on our activities like our Facebook page Trans Pride Australia Community and Events.

AJ Brown
President, Trans Pride Australia

KEEPING SOCIAL MEDIA A POSITIVE & SAFE PLACE

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of all the lands on which we work and pay respects to the Elders, past, present and emerging.

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PROTECT YOUR SPACE

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

HOW TO

From your profile page, access your Settings menu. Scroll down 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 ? icon on the top-right of your Facebook page, and select Privacy Checkup.

Matt Hey

@ALRIGHTHEY

“When it comes to who you interact with on social media, just remember, YOU have the power and YOU have the upper hand. Because you can use social media tools to allow who interacts with you, and what the consequences are if they interact in a way you don’t agree with. If I receive hateful comments, I can easily block and report the person. Then I like to go back and read positive comments so I don’t sit and think about what that person said. It reassures me that this persons opinion doesn’t add up with everyone else’s!”

BE PICKY 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 choose who sees your post.

HOW TO

Instead of the main upload tool, click on the Instagram Direct icon in the top right corner and choose who to share it with (up to 15 people). 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.

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

MUTE THE NOISE

It's okay if you need a break from someone you follow, on Instagram you can use Mute to hide another account'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.

HOW TO

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. You can also mute them by pressing and holding on a story in your tray or from a profile.

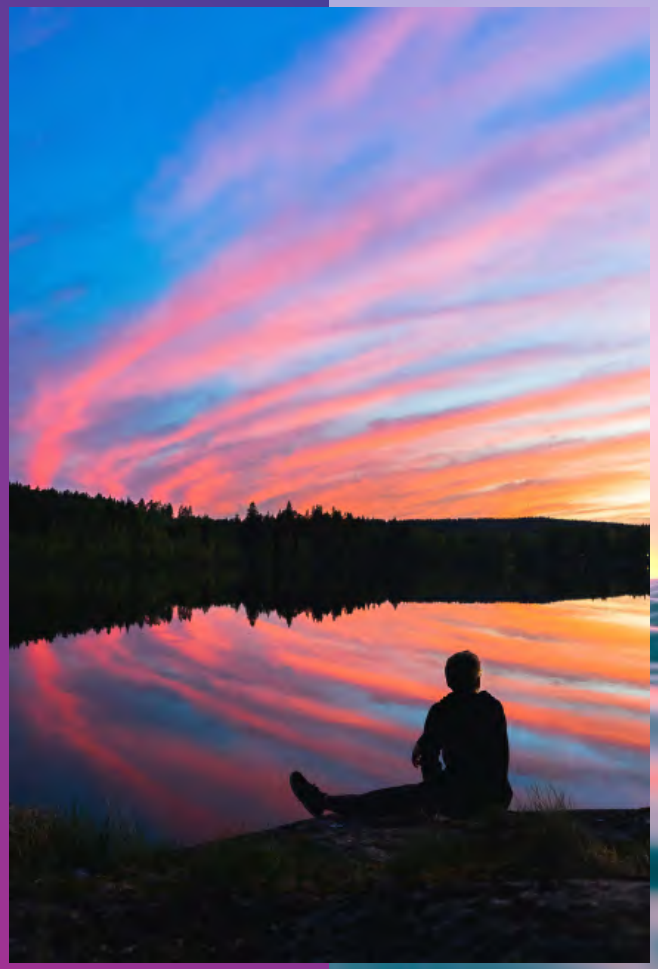
To Snooze someone, click to ••• on the top-right of one of their posts, and select snooze. The person, Page or group you've snoozed won't know that they've been snoozed.

You can also take a break from social media, or manage how you spend your time online, with the time management tools on Instagram and Facebook.

HOW TO

In your Settings menu, click on Your Activity. You can then view how much time you're spending on Instagram, set daily reminders to limit the time you spend online, 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.



AJ Clementine

@AJCLEMENTINE_

“Social media has allowed me to express my creativity and give me a voice. The mainstream media has little to no visibility of transgender people and it was difficult for me to find people to relate to. I decided to share my own story and hopefully help others in the process. I simply block out the negative people. I do this through my thoughts but also digitally with the block/ restrict features. I try to put the aim and focus onto what we see/feel is right and try to not fight hate with more hate.”

OWNING 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

Go to the profile of the person you'd like to unfollow and tap Unfollow.

Click the downward arrow at the top-right of any Facebook page. 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.

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. (And you can unblock them at any time.)

HOW TO

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

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

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. Restricted people aren't able to see when you're active on Instagram or when you've read their direct messages.

HOW TO

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

Cub Sport

@CUBSPORT

“In my experience as a queer person you’re never truly done ‘coming out.’ For me, understanding and expressing my sexuality and gender identity has been a journey - one that I’m still navigating. I feel really fortunate to be able to share my journey with the beautiful online community around Cub Sport. Being able to connect with other people like me is really inspiring, validating and encouraging. When I see other queer people fearlessly expressing themselves, it reminds me that I can do the same - it’s a really powerful ripple effect that inspires people to be their authentic selves.”

Tim Nelson
Singer/Songwriter/Producer

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.

CONTROL THE COMMENTS

Instagram and Facebook have comment controls which allow you to choose who comments on your posts.

HOW TO

Select Comment Controls in the Settings menu — there you can choose to allow comments from: 1) everyone, 2) people you follow and those people's followers, 3) just the people you follow, or 4) your followers. You can also turn off comments entirely from your posts.

To change who can comment on your public posts, click the downward arrow at the top-right of any Facebook page and select Settings. Click Public Posts on the left. Go to Who Can Follow Me and make sure Public is selected. Click Edit next to Public Post Comments, then select who is allowed to like or comment on your public posts.

You can also enter which words, phrases, and emojis you find offensive, and any comments containing them will be automatically hidden from you (but 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.

LOOK OUT FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Homophobia 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.

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 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 reason for reporting (ie. Suicide or Self-Injury).

Robyn Lambird

@ROBYNLAMBIRD

“I work pretty hard to create a community around my Instagram presence that is positive and uplifting. Working to remind myself and others that negative people and comments are not a reflection on me or my beliefs. One of the ways I do this is by only engaging with hashtags and individuals that are creating spaces for meaningful conversations and content that is respectful of our societies beautiful diversity. I don’t give time and energy to negativity and instead choose to focus on creating the change I wish to see in the world.”

FINDING YOUR COMMUNITY

Find the people and groups that connect you to life-affirming content and communities of support.

HOW TO

Some commonly used hashtags for inspiration include:

#YouAreNotAlone
#SelfCare
#TransIsBeautiful
#LGBTQAustralia
#LoveIsLove
#LoveWins
#BeKind
#YouMatter

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 FACEBOOK GROUP

If you're an admin or a moderator of a 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 groups is Public, anyone can see who's in the group and what they post. If the group is Private, only members can see who's in the group and what they post.

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 5000 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 Edit Group Settings and 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.

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 and false news 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.

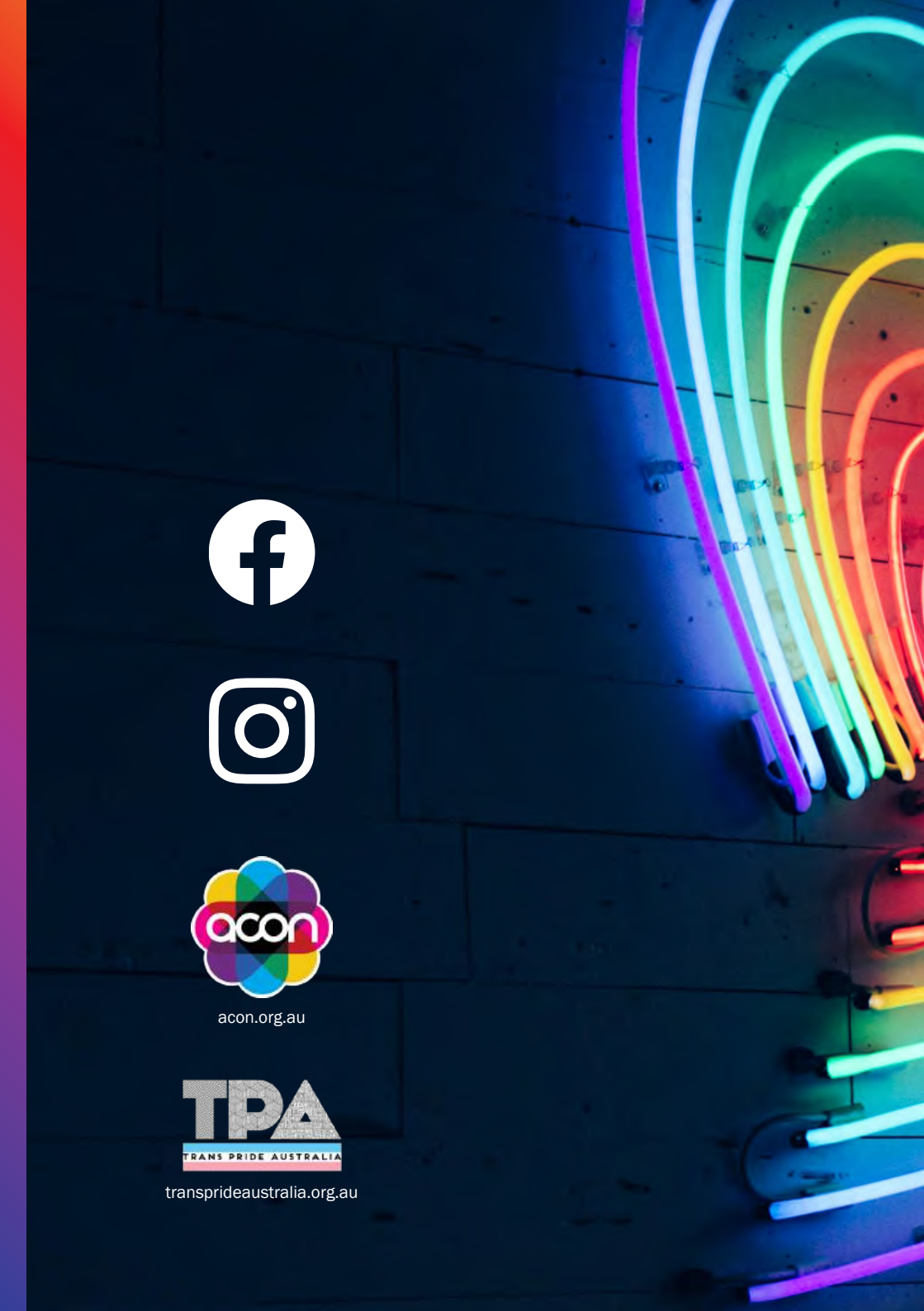
For further information and many more tips on managing groups, visit our Help Center at facebook.com/help

Trans Pride Australia

FACEBOOK.COM/TRANSPRIDEAU

Trans Pride Australia added common words that trolls use against the trans community to the filter option on our Facebook Groups page. This completely changed the environment, blocking many negative comments and instead promoting healthy, positive conversation. We also find pre-approved posts is a great way to ensure only the right content for the community reaches our group's feed.

Photo by Ann-Marie Calilhanna
Courtesy of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras



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