SAMARITANS

Promoting online excellence in suicide prevention through collaboration and transparency

This information sheet provides guidance for sites and platforms hosting user-generated content. It provides guidance on working collaboratively and transparently to promote industry excellence in suicide prevention. Working collaboratively and transparently promotes consistency across online spaces and allows for best practice approaches for managing suicide and self-harm to be shared across the industry, helping to keep users safe.

Collaboration and shared learning

Collaboration across the industry

To promote excellence across the industry, companies should establish ways to share practices, insights and learnings with one another to protect vulnerable users. More-established companies are likely to have insights that could be shared with new and developing companies to better protect their users. By working collaboratively, products and services can promote consistency across platforms and keep more users safe.

Examples of helpful insights include:

- **Platform responses** to self-harm and suicide content and the benefits and limitations of approaches.

- **Trends and issues** relating to self-harm and suicide emerging on the platform.

- **Approaches to content moderation** such as, the ways that human moderation and artificial intelligence (AI) can be used to detect and respond to self-harm and suicide content.

- **Sharing resources** for example, by making databases of harmful keywords to develop safer search features. Established companies could consider making effective content reporting processes open source or available by request.

- **User support.** Effective ways of supporting users experiencing self-harm and suicidal feelings.

- **Staff support.** Effective wellbeing support for employees and human moderators exposed to self-harm and suicide content.

When sharing knowledge and insights, companies must take care to ensure that the privacy of their users is protected.

Collaboration with subject matter experts

Sites and platforms should ensure that their approaches to managing self-harm and suicide content are informed by subject matter experts in order to **reflect the latest evidence** and the **voices of people with lived experience.** Consultation with academics, third sector organisations, health care professionals and individuals with personal experience of self-harm or suicide will help to ensure that approaches are robust, evidence based and sensitive.

As self-harm and suicide are complex issues, it is best practice to involve a range of subject matter experts to ensure approaches are balanced and represent a range of views.

Working transparently

Transparency with users

It is essential that companies share information with site and platform users about their approaches to self-harm and suicide content. This includes having publicly available, clear and accessible community guidelines and policies on how self-harm and suicide content is managed on their platform.

Transparency with the wider sector

It is essential that companies are transparent with users and external audiences about approaches to self-harm and suicide content.

Companies should be open to sharing insights on the following, making sure that individual and global privacy laws are maintained:

- **Prevalence of self-harm and suicide content on the platform,** and why this might be.

- **Average number of views of content that breaks community guidelines.**

- **Mechanisms in place to detect and respond to self-harm and suicide content** – such as content moderation, user-reporting and signposting to support.

- **Action taken to content that breaks community guidelines** – including the percentage of reported content that is removed and average time taken to respond to user reports.

- **Resource allocated to responding to self-harm and suicide content** – such as the number of human moderators and the extent to which AI is used, in proportion to the level of content.

For larger companies this may take the form of an annual report. Smaller companies may consider making this information available on their website or sharing it when requested by individuals with legitimate interest such as researchers and government agencies.

How to safely publish transparency data about self-harm and suicide

Publicly reporting high prevalence rates of self-harm and suicide content may inadvertently encourage vulnerable users to access specific platforms to seek out potentially harmful content. To mitigate potential risks, larger sites could report figures as rates per 10,000 views of prohibited content, while smaller sites should consider posting this data as percentages.

- Reports could also **include signposting to support services.**

If sharing data with the media, companies can also contact **Samaritans' Media Advisory Service** for guidance on working with media to support responsible reporting. The team is available at **mediaadvice@samaritans.org.**

How Samaritans can help you

For further support and advice on responding to self-harm and suicide content online, please see our website or contact the Samaritans' Online Harms Advisory Service at onlineharms@samaritans.org Email monitored Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm.