



# HOW TO

# #CONTROL YOUR SCROLL

## A Guide for Young People

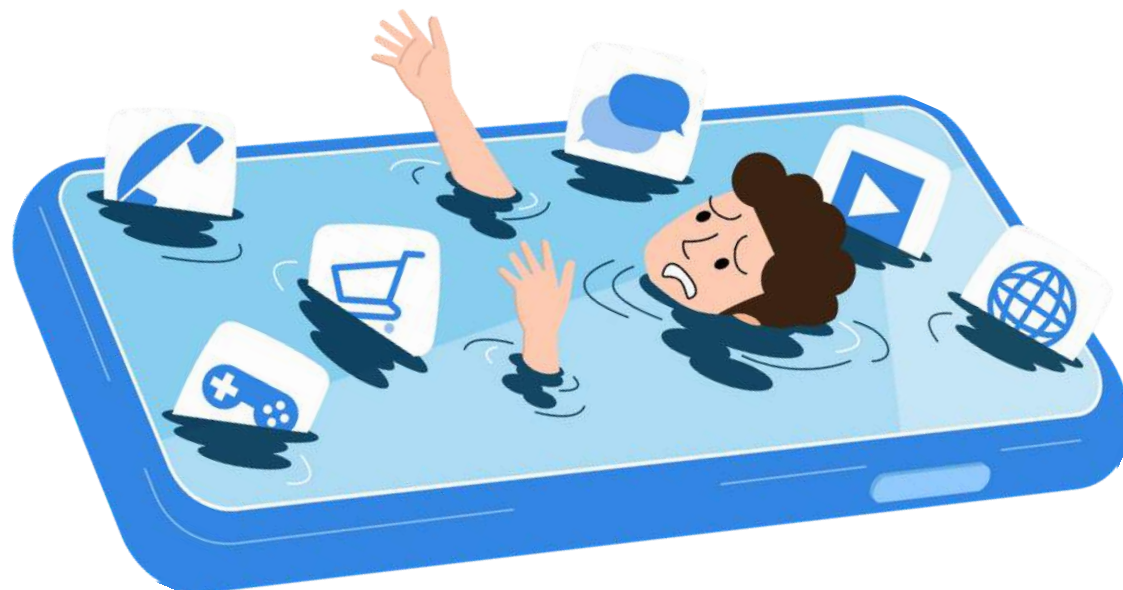




## INTRODUCTION

"How to #ControlYourScroll offers valuable tips for living a positive and healthy life both online and offline. This guide addresses various online challenges faced by young people, providing practical strategies to manage difficulties, overcome obstacles, and #ControlYourScroll."

To enjoy a better online experience and boost your confidence, it's essential to develop basic digital skills and manage your online engagement. Take time to notice your emotional responses to online interactions. Try new things, from sharing content to creating your own, and remember that mistakes are a part of the process—you can always bounce back.





## BASIC DIGITAL SKILLS

Being online is like learning to drive. You need basic skills to make the most of your experience while ensuring safety for yourself and others. These skills include:

- Using devices effectively.
- Protecting your information and thinking critically about the information you access.
- Reflecting on how your interactions impact you emotionally.
- Creating content that is accurate and kind.
- Staying updated on emerging technologies and challenges.
- Behaving online as you would offline, with respect and within the law.

**REMEMBER: YOU ARE THE BRIDGE BETWEEN YOUR ONLINE AND OFFLINE LIVES.**





# CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

## #CONTROL YOUR SEARCH

Here are some tips to ensure that your searches and posts don't unintentionally impact your mental health negatively.



Use trusted websites and enable safe search settings.



Beware of sensational headlines—they often serve as 'clickbait' and may contain inaccurate information.



Be cautious with your personal information.



Always question and fact-check\* the content you encounter online.



## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### SENSITIVE TOPICS

How to Stay Safe When Searching for Content on Sensitive Topics

#### **Tip 1: About You**

Understand your reasons for searching. If you're seeking confirmation, avoid 'biased searching.' This means looking for balanced information from both sides of an argument rather than just confirming your existing beliefs.

#### **Tip 2: About Your Triggers**

Recognize the early signs of mental distress in yourself—such as constant negative thoughts, feeling on edge, trouble sleeping or eating, irritability, anger, difficulty going out, or panic. If you experience these symptoms intensely, stop your search, calm yourself, and talk to a trusted person.

#### **Tip 3: About the Search**

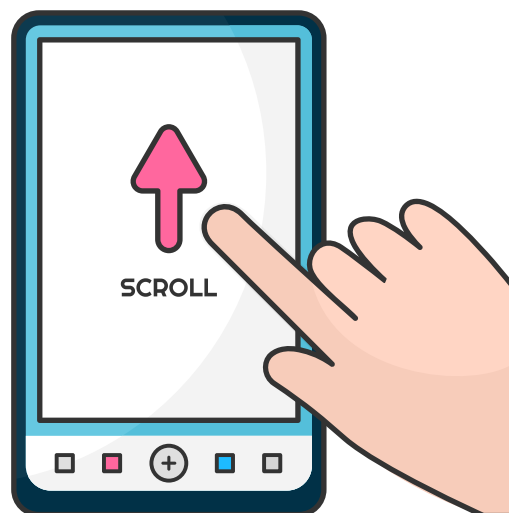
Use a secure search engine like DuckDuckGo, which doesn't track your searches or store your information. Be mindful of the keywords you use, as they can influence the information presented to you. Verify the trustworthiness of your sources. Consult a trusted adult and seek professional advice. Remember, everyone is unique, so general information may not always be applicable to your situation.



## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT ALGORITHMS

Algorithms dictate the content you encounter without your consent or control, which can negatively affect your mental health. It's important to learn how to regain control over these algorithms.

Algorithms are operational processes designed to rank, select, and present content to users. They collect personal data, employ machine learning to analyze this data, personalize the content shown to individuals, and target them with advertisements aimed at influencing further behaviors. As a result, algorithms wield significant influence.





## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### ALGORITHM INFLUENCERS

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**Algorithmic influencers** - can lead to bias, manipulation, harmful behavior, and discrimination."



**"Aggro-rithm" influencers** - leverage your inputted data to seemingly predict your thoughts or identity.



**"Aggressive-rithm" influencers.** - display unsolicited information or images that may be disturbing, upsetting, or cause you to feel bad or self-conscious about yourself.





## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### ALGORITHM INFLUENCERS



#### Algorithmic influencers

Machine learning and predictive algorithms ensure that trending, sensational, or inaccurate topics are added and presented as though they are tailored specifically for you. When negative trending information is mixed with personalized content, its influence can be significant.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Take Control: "AI-Grow-ithm" influencers thrive on the information you provide. Think of yourself as the puppeteer, not the puppet. Limit the data you share to avoid their influence. Check privacy policies and how your data is used, opt for secure search engines like 'DuckDuckGo' that don't store data, and be mindful of the search terms you use—sensational or trending keywords can lead to tailored content delivery.





## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### ALGORITHM INFLUENCERS



#### "Aggro-rithm" influencers

The more data provided online and on social media (such as browsing history, location, demographics, searches, likes, and friends), the more personalized content algorithms can generate for individuals, often within seconds. For instance, inputting details like age, gender, and location can quickly tailor content to fit individual preferences. "Aggro-rithm" influencers are notably powerful because they appear to anticipate your thoughts and identity. You can observe their influence by comparing the content on your 'For You' or 'Explore' page with that of your friends. Even if you've used similar search terms, the results may differ significantly.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO

To counter "Aggro-rithm" influencers, reflect on the values of trusted influencers in your life. If their perspectives differ from those of "Aggro-rithm" influencers, prioritize the values of those you trust. Discuss "Aggro-rithm" suggestions with trusted adults, older siblings, or wise friends to gain perspective.



## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### ALGORITHM INFLUENCERS



#### "Aggressive-rithm" influencers

Occasionally, you may encounter unwanted and unsolicited information or images that can be disturbing, upsetting, or leave you feeling self-conscious. "Don't let 'Aggressive-rithm' influencers alter you. Take action to prevent their intrusion instead!"

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Take a moment to check in with yourself. Reflect on how the information is affecting your emotions and thoughts. If it's causing negativity, step back. Express your originality by sharing your ideas on your newsfeed to influence recommender systems. Keep a diary to stay connected with your thoughts and to track your personal growth. Stay true to your values and identity. Don't follow the crowd—be a leader. If you have a viewpoint, stand by it without feeling pressured to conform, even if others do.



## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### CLEAN YOUR FEED



**Click on the positive to curate your feed** - Many young people manage their news feeds by selectively clicking on positive content. This strategy aims to train algorithms to prioritize uplifting content and reduce the presence of negative or extreme content.



**Be mindful, not mindless** - Pay attention to how your interaction with online information affects you. Just as you wouldn't tolerate threats in your offline life, be vigilant about what you encounter online.



**Plan Ahead** - Even with the best digital skills, you may come across something extreme and upsetting. Have a support plan in place for who you can turn to for help.



## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT CLEAN YOUR FEED



**It's not your fault** - Technology is complex, and it's impossible for anyone to get everything right.



**If it gets to much** - If it becomes too overwhelming, report what upsets you, talk to trusted individuals, take a break from being online to gain perspective. Additionally, utilize helpful resources like the ones listed below.



**NSPCC**

**childline**

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME

**stem4i**  
supporting teenage mental health



## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### CONTROL YOUR POST

#### THINK BEFORE YOU POST

- ? What is your intention behind your post? Ask yourself, "What do I hope to achieve?"
- ? What do you want to communicate? Consider its immediate impact on you and how it might affect you in the future.
- ? Share cautiously; sharing less is often better than sharing too much.
- ? Consider how your post will impact those who read or see it. Is this the reaction you intend to evoke?
- ? How will you handle not achieving the outcome you expected?



## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### CALM EMOTIONS



If you are experiencing intense emotions (rated 7 out of 10 or higher), prioritize addressing your emotions first before using social media.



Be authentic online. This means avoiding creating a false image by refraining from over-editing, excessive self-promotion, using fake images, or sharing fabricated information.



Before sharing information about others, obtain their permission first.





## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### FIXING MISTAKES

How to address mistakes if something goes wrong: if you have posted something you regret

! Remove the content: If you've posted something you now regret, take it down promptly to mitigate its impact, even if it has already been viewed.

! Apologise: If your post has inadvertently upset someone, listen to their concerns and offer a genuine apology for any unintended harm caused.



## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT CONTROL YOUR CONNECTIONS

Young people often share that one of their primary reasons for going online is to connect with others. Our interactions profoundly influence our well-being. Close relationships provide stability and happiness, fostering psychological safety and personal growth. Positive engagement with others enhances community belonging and self-esteem, while negative interactions can lead to isolation and low mood. Strong social connections are linked to lower stress, reduced mental health risks, and faster recovery from trauma and illness.





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## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### ONLINE VS OFFLINE CONNECTIONS



**Anytime, anywhere** - Our phones keep us connected with friends and family consistently, even with those abroad who we couldn't otherwise reach.



**Support networks** - In times when we can't physically be with loved ones, the digital age helps reduce feelings of isolation.



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**Various communication methods** - Whether by phone, text, social media, or video calls—offer numerous ways to stay in touch with loved ones.



## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### ONLINE VS OFFLINE CONNECTIONS



**Quantity over quality interactions-** Digital communication can lack the depth of face-to-face interactions, leading to potential misunderstandings.



**Overwhelmed -** The constant availability for online communication can take a toll. Without breaks, it can lead to burnout.



**Shallow Online Interactions -** Interactions online often lack the depth of offline connections. It's important to prioritise meaningful offline connections.

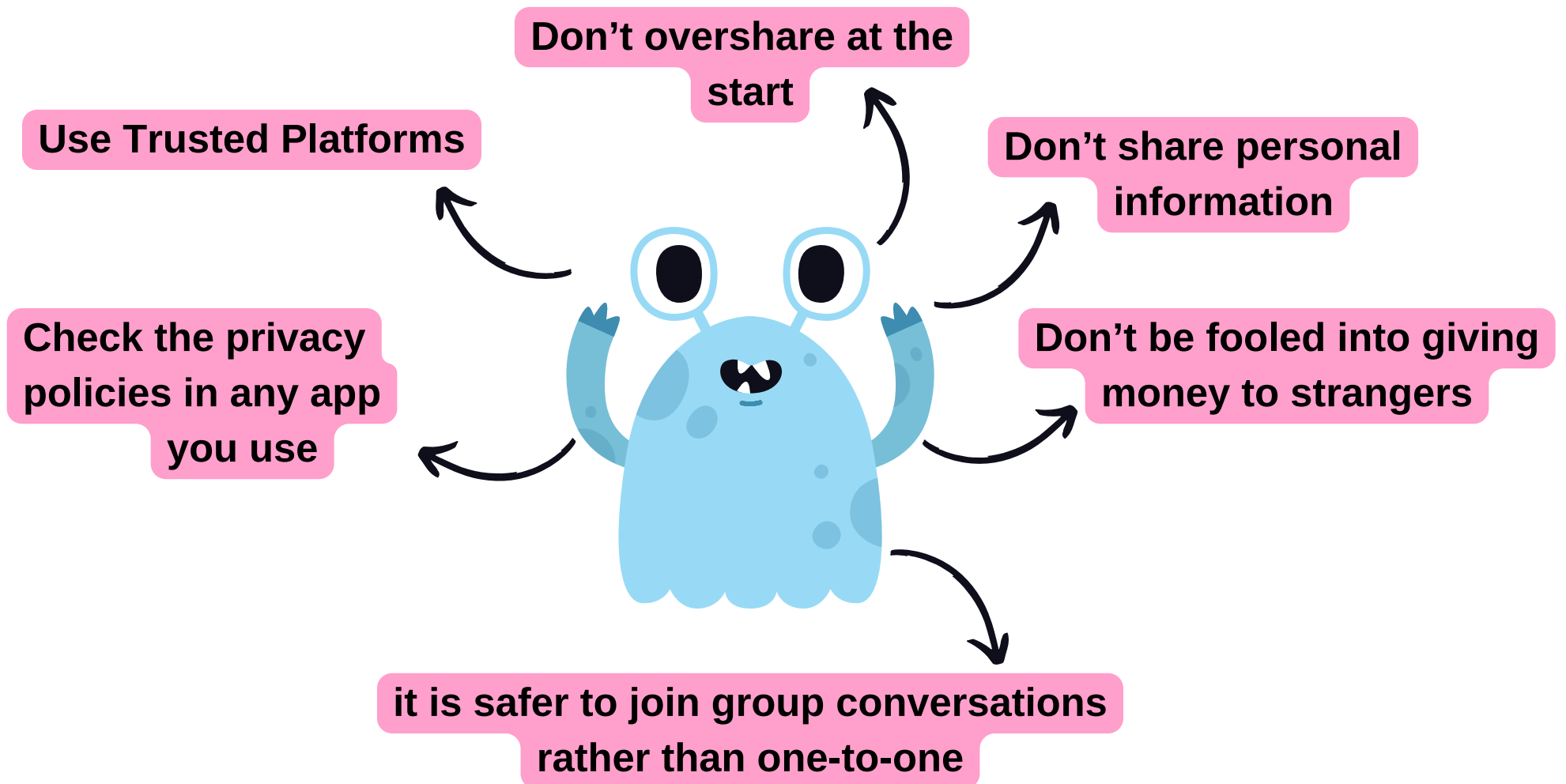


**Potential Risks -** It's challenging to assess the trustworthiness of individuals we meet online. Some exploit digital connections to harm young people, so it's crucial to be cautious when forming online relationships.



# CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

## KEEPING SAFE







## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### KEEPING SAFE

#### ONLINE SAFETY TOP TIPS



Exercise caution if they request personal information or photos early on.



Exercise caution if they request personal information or photos early on.



It may seem exciting or flattering, but refrain from sending nude photographs.



If someone asks you to switch to another platform to connect, decline. This request often aims to gather more personal information from you.



# CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

## KEEPING SAFE

### ONLINE SAFETY TOP TIPS



Do not rely solely on photographs. Instead, ask them to write a unique sentence you provide and take a photograph of themselves holding it, then send it to you immediately.



Report any suspicious activity or inappropriate behavior promptly.



Inform your parents or a responsible adult about your online activities. Despite feeling embarrassed, they can provide valuable assistance and support.



Stay updated on the latest online scams and learn how to stay safe.



Do not pay money out of fear that someone will report you, even if you believe you've made a mistake.



## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### MISSUNDERSTANDINGS

It's common to misunderstand things online. Even if you meant one thing, the other person may interpret it differently.

Listen – hear what they say.  
Don't jump to conclusions

Be constructive - show you care  
about the relationship and that  
you want to move forward.

Ask – what do they think it  
means?

Acknowledge the impact—  
people won't listen until their  
feelings are heard, especially  
when they're hurt.

Try and get to the root of the  
problem.

Ask – what do they think it  
means?

Listen – hear what they say.  
Don't jump to conclusions





## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### CONFIDENTIALITY

#### Dealing with Breaches of Confidentiality

Friends might find it amusing or a joke to post something about someone. Pause and consider the repercussions. While it may seem harmless to some, it can be embarrassing and humiliating to others. Screenshots could circulate before content is removed, spreading faster than anticipated. Remember, everything is recorded and stored somewhere, even though the internet is vast and finding it may be challenging. Sharing confidential information online, belittling someone, or spreading rumors constitutes bullying.





# CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

## CONFIDENTIALITY

### WHAT YOU CAN DO



Take a screenshot of the evidence.



Report this to a trusted adult and block the person or people



Don't share personal information online, and don't share your location with someone you don't know.



If personal information about your address, phone number or any other information has been shared, report this to the social media platform it's on and they can take it down.



## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT COMPARISON

Comparing yourself to others is a normal human response. Social media platforms provide ample opportunities for social comparison, which intensifies as they become more interactive.

Many people go online when feeling low, seeking social connections that alleviate feelings of loneliness in their struggles. Finding someone who shares similar feelings can bring a sense of relief. However, everyone is unique. It's crucial not to succumb to pressure to feel the same as someone else, whether they're feeling better or worse than you.

Pay attention to posts that make you feel down about yourself. Your reaction to a post is influenced by how you think about and interpret it.

Catch yourself in a 'self-critical mindset' and try to cultivate an 'self-acceptance mindset' instead. For instance, rather than thinking 'I'm not as good,' think 'I am who I am, and they are who they are,' or 'I am my own unique person.'

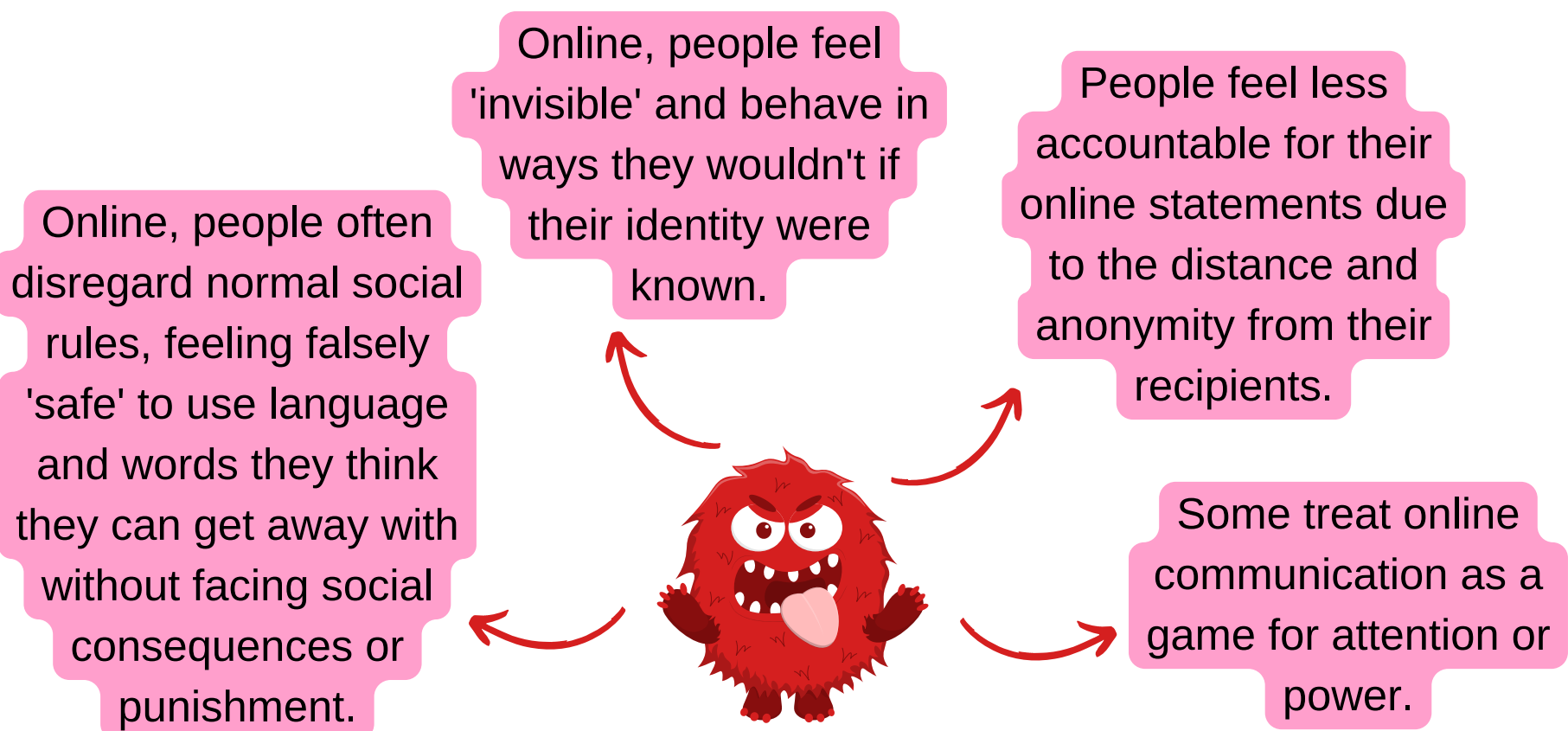




## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### HURTFUL LANGUAGE

People behave differently online compared to face-to-face interactions. The consequences are often less clear, making it harder to interpret tone and intention. Therefore, online behavior tends to be less kind more frequently.





## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying involves using technology to send messages or images with the intention of embarrassing, harassing, spreading rumours, threatening, or hurting a person. Bullying is always wrong, regardless of the format. Here are some tips to protect yourself from cyberbullying.

- Tell a trusted adult or call Childline on 0800 11 11.
- Keep evidence of the messages. Don't delete anything.
- Show a record of the messages to the trusted adult you report what's happening to.
- Don't forward any messages on to show how terrible the person sending it is.
- Resist the temptation to retaliate or fight back.
- If you can, report the incident to the administrator of the website. Most social media apps have a cyberbullying report centre. You can also report abuse to CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Centre).
- Reach out to a mental health facility to address the effects of bullying.
- Surround yourself with supportive friends.



## CONTROL YOUR CONTENT

### TROLLING

Trolls are people who deliberately post upsetting comments which other trolls then pile on top of to join the attack. The intention of a troll is to 'bait', which means trying to get an emotional reaction or argument. As trolls seek to provoke intense reactions in others, they pick on personal material, and will often create online hate by picking on race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Because they promote hate, trolls post under fake names or anonymously.





## CONTROL YOUR FOLLOW

Seeking inspiration from others is natural. We follow people doing amazing things in incredible places, hoping to do the same one day. It's important to be mindful of who you follow to control the content you see.





the UK's leading digital mental health charity for children and young people. We offer a suite of 5 evidence-based mental health apps that support various mental health conditions as well as digitally delivered mental health literacy programmes in schools.

**childline**

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME



Childline is a free, confidential helpline for children and young people in the UK, providing support and counseling on various issues such as abuse, bullying, and mental health. Available 24/7 via phone, online chat, and email.

**NSPCC**



The NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) is a UK charity dedicated to protecting children from abuse and neglect. It provides support services, raises awareness, and campaigns for child protection policies and practices.



face your fear with the Clear Fear app and learn to reduce the physical responses to threat as well as changing thoughts and behaviours and releasing emotions.



Worth Warrior is a free app created for young people to manage negative body image, low self-worth, and related early-stage eating difficulties or disorders.