

# ONLINE HELP

Using the internet to gain access to help resources is now easier than ever with the advent of online therapy and online counseling.

Online counseling has been proven to be just as effective as traditional in-person sessions and is often cheaper due to the convenience of being online. Internet connections also allow individuals to receive help from the comfort of their own home and on their own timing. Many online counseling agencies will also be covered by insurance (you will have to check with your insurance company to see if this is possible).

Some great places to start to learn more about online counseling/therapy:

[www.7CupsOfTea.com](http://www.7CupsOfTea.com)  
[www.BetterHelp.com](http://www.BetterHelp.com)  
[www.Breakthrough.com](http://www.Breakthrough.com)  
[www.OnlineCounselling.com](http://www.OnlineCounselling.com)  
[www.TalkSpace.com](http://www.TalkSpace.com)  
[www.ThriveWorks.com](http://www.ThriveWorks.com)

# QUICK TIPS

Only accept people you actually know on your social media accounts.

Don't post anything you wouldn't want your grandparents or future employers seeing.

Use security and privacy features on all websites.

Fact-check all online information.

Bookmark help resources and online chat websites if you're hurting or worried about a loved one.

Search for your county's mental health services and become familiar with local help agencies.

## GET HELP NOW:

**TEXT:** 741-741  
**CALL:** 1-800-273-8255  
**CHAT ONLINE:** [IMALIVE.ORG](http://IMALIVE.ORG)



# MENTAL HEALTH

How to stay mentally healthy in a digital world.



**PLEASE  
LIVE  
.ORG**

# THE INTERNET IS A TOOL

**Just like any other tool, the internet can be used for good or bad. The internet, social media, and similar sites can be incredibly beneficial, but only if navigated correctly.**

## CONNECTEDNESS VS COMPARISON

Social media – whether its Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, or something else – is designed to increase our connection with other humans. Humans are social creatures, and we need connection with others to live healthy and happy lives.

However, too much social media can lead us into the trap of comparison. Society always puts their “best foot forward” online, which means we often see others post only the best photos, best statuses, and best events. This can leave us feeling like we’re the only one who doesn’t “have it all together”.

Remember that using social media to connect to friends and family is what it’s meant for – NOT for comparing your life to someone else’s. No one has it all together, despite what their social media looks like!

Additionally, don’t connect with people you don’t know! Online predators often send random friend requests through social media. If you don’t know them, don’t accept them. Period.

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Never before have we had access to as much information as we do today via the internet! With a simple search, we can find information on nearly anything we want.

The trick is finding the truth in the midst of a sea of search results. Due to the internet’s accessibility across the world, anyone can create a credible-looking website and write whatever they want on it. You cannot believe everything you read online.

Before accepting any information as fact, do your research to make sure the information is reliable.

Similarly, put up safeguards for yourself. Many websites and search engines come with filtering tools to keep the darker and malicious sites out of sight. Be aware that the internet houses some awful content and it takes effort to avoid it

## BE AWARE OF WHAT YOU POST

What you put online, stays online – even if you “delete it”. Photos, statuses, videos, it all remains permanently out in cyberspace. Digital media stored in the Cloud can, and often does, get hacked and leaked.

Protect yourself by never posting any material anywhere that you wouldn’t want your grandparents or future employers to see. Yes, future employers WILL look at your internet history!

Search...



## HELPING OTHERS

Have you ever had a friend or family member post something scary online? Maybe a status or a photo that triggered your spidey-senses that something wasn’t right?

Understanding if someone is in danger is especially difficult online, since you can’t see their face or body language through text alone. Also, for platforms with character limit (such as Twitter’s 140 limit), it can be extra hard to tell if someone is hurting.

As a rule of thumb, if you’re worried or concerned, *do something*. It’s always better to reach out during a false alarm than to ignore a real threat.

### Specifically, keep an eye out for posts that:

- Suggest hopelessness or despair
- Feature self-injury, drug use, abuse, or suicidal thoughts
- Appear to be saying goodbye
- Are threatening towards self or anyone else
- Suggests poster is a burden

### Some examples of red-flag posts:

- “Well, this is it. Signing out. See you all on the other side.”
- “Things are never going to get better, so what’s the point in trying?”
- “No one would even care if I wasn’t around anymore.”
- “Can’t I do anything right?”
- “You will all regret treating me this way.”
- “The world will be better off without me.”

*If you’re concerned about a loved one online, report the post, reach out to the individual personally (like a phone call) to see if they’re okay, and reach out to a crisis line (on the back of this pamphlet) for help. Call 911 if you believe someone is in immediate danger.*