

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE ABUSE



ADVICE FROM PARTICIPANTS IN A @UCCSOCIALWORK STUDY FOR THEIR PEERS



PEER-TO-PEER ADVICE



- **Take Action Immediately:** "Don't let it continue until you get to the point where you're thinking, ok, I now want to do something about it". Act as soon as something occurs and "Don't brush it off as just one of those things that you have to accept, cause it's not..."
- **Work-Life Boundaries:** This is a work-related issue and should be contained, where practicable, within working hours. Try not let this eat into your personal and family time by regularly checking for posts.
- **Abusive Content:** As hard as it may be, abstain from viewing the negative content, "Don't view, don't go onto Twitter (X) or wherever it's been posted and view it".

[NON] ENGAGEMENT



- **Do Not Engage with the Perpetrator(s)** as study participants believed that it is not a helpful response, that it may "legitimise" their behaviour, and/or "escalate" the situation. 81% of survey participants did not engage.
- **Do engage with supports:** reach out to colleagues, management, occupational health, Gardaí (police), and/or legal services for support and advice.

ONLINE SAFETY



- **Review Security Settings:** You have every right to have and enjoy a personal social media account. However, it is important to make sure that your social media settings are set to protect your online safety & privacy.
- **Skills:** If required, ask a tech-savvy colleague/friend to help you review your social media settings.
- **Social Media Use:** Be cautious about what you share online. Consider when posting content you wouldn't want publicly visible to those who are not friends or family.
- **Evaluate:** Evaluate the pros and cons of social media: several study participants stated that they wouldn't be on social media knowing what they know now. However, most still kept their accounts open despite the abuse.

PRACTICAL ACTIONS



- **Social Media Policy:** Familiarise yourself with your agency's social media policy and other relevant guidelines (available on our website below).
- **Report (management):** Report any incidents to your line manager as soon as possible. If relevant, ask your organisation to issue a "take down" request on your behalf.
- **Report (police):** Report relevant incidents to An Garda Síochána (police) to have it on record, if appropriate, and you are comfortable to do so.
- **Report (social media):** Report abusive content to social media platforms (see our website for advice).

SUPPORTS



- **Peer Support:** Reach out for emotional and practical support from peers. Study findings highlight the importance of having support from team members. Participants rarely sought support from family.
- **Managerial Support:** Seek support from your line manager: they can often provide guidance and resources to support you through this time. They do not need to be a social media expert to provide effective support (see website for a guide for managers).



A. Bradley, K. Burns, O. Halvey & F. Ó Súilleabháin (2024)



Further advice & resources:

[UCC.IE/EN/APPSOC/RESEARCH/PROJECTS/SMOA](https://ucc.ie/en/appsoc/research/projects/smoa)



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