Digital Resilience for Charities

# INTRODUCTION

This resource has been developed by Glitch and is designed for people working in charities and their supporters to improve their digital resilience and feel safe to use their voices in online spaces. Online abuse has a silencing impact, where those who experience abuse stop participating in online discussions and spaces. As women experience more online abuse, their voices and experiences are being silenced more often.

This guide recognises that online spaces can be particularly hostile to anyone working for the rights of women and girls and marginalised communities (for example, Black women, LGBTQ+ women, and disabled women). Online abuse can be a barrier to charities sharing the important work they are doing, building their communities and standing up for the rights of others. We hope this guide will help charities, their employees and supporters to feel confident to speak out and to begin creating a community that amplifies each other's voices and offers support when things go wrong.
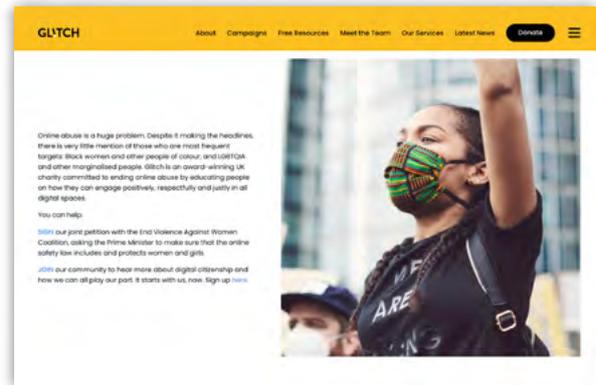
ABOUT GLITCH

Glitch wants to awaken a generation of digital citizens equipped to create and demand safe online spaces for all.

We are an award-winning UK charity committed to ending online abuse by educating people on how we can engage positively, respectfully and justly in all digital spaces.

We believe in empowering everyone to advocate for others – especially those in marginalised communities. Through research and reports, toolkits and guides, workshops and training, we're here to help make digital citizens of everyone. We can all play our part. It starts with us, now.

DEFINITIONS

Online Abuse: An umbrella term that encompasses the various forms and tactics of abuse, intimidation and violence in online spaces.

Digital Citizenship: Individuals engaging positively, critically and competently in all digital spaces. All individuals have the right to safely and freely engage in online spaces without discrimination. Digital citizenship is respecting and championing the human rights of all individuals online and encompasses three key elements: individual, social and institutional responsibilities.

Digital Self-Defence: Proactively using offline and online tools to set yourself up as securely as possible in online spaces and mitigate the risks and the impact of online abuse.

Digital Self-Care: Recognising, setting, and communicating your boundaries in digital spaces in order to have a flourishing and positive online experience.

Online Active Bystander: A tool that encourages individuals to intervene (when it is safe for them to do so) and support a person who is being abused or harassed online.

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FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

Sometimes working or volunteering for a charity means speaking out online. These tips are designed to help you feel confident to do this online and talk about the important work you are doing.

DIGITAL SELF-DEFENCE

- **Document Online Abuse:** Documenting online abuse provides a record of what happened, helps to consolidate information about perpetrators and provides you with evidence of the impacts of online abuse. It will help you see patterns, understand if the abuse is escalating, and report the abuse to your work, the police or other authorities, if you need to. Read more about documenting online abuse **here**.

- **Avoid Personal Details:** Create a second social media account for your public role and use a nickname or alias for your personal accounts. Avoid sharing lots of personal details on your social media and dating profiles. The less information you share about yourself and where you are, the more secure you'll be.

- **Use a VPN:** Only use public Wi-Fi through a VPN (a virtual private network), downloadable from providers such as **ExpressVPN** or **NordVPN**. Data between your device and the public network will then be encrypted and protected. This means it is harder for people with malicious intent to access your data.

Avoid sharing lots of personal details on your social media and dating profiles.
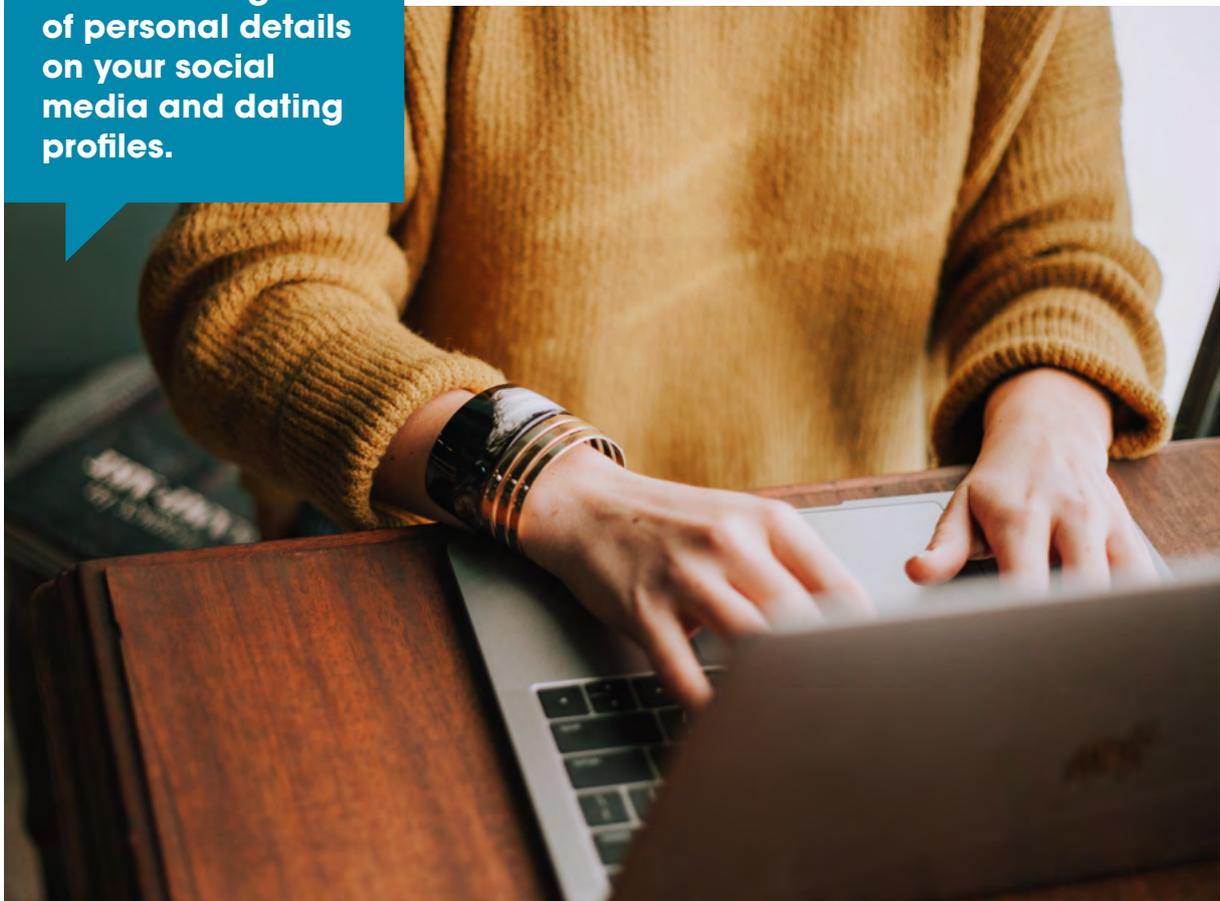
Photo by Christin Hume on Unsplash

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DIGITAL SELF-CARE

- **Use Separate Devices:** Have separate work and personal phones if you can. This will help you to create healthy boundaries between your professional life and personal life. Set boundaries about when you will have your work phone on and stick to them.

- **Define and Communicate Your Boundaries:** Think about what your boundaries might be in online spaces.
  - What is your page for?
  - What isn't acceptable on your page?
  - What will you do if people cross your boundaries?

  Use a pinned post explaining what you will/won't engage with online. Some good examples can be found here:
  - **Bloody Good Period**
  - **Survivors' Network**

- **Take Time Offline:** When things are going wrong online it can feel very overwhelming and you may feel the need to respond immediately as the notifications come flooding in. Consider turning your device off and going to do something you enjoy – whether that is walking, going for coffee with a friend, gaming or going to the cinema. Whatever it is, do the things that make you feel good.

ONLINE ACTIVE BYSTANDER

- **Spot:** We can all be guilty of scrolling past when we see abuse and hate online. Stopping and being mindful of it means we can start taking action. Don't dismiss it, ignore it or expect it. When you see online abuse, stop, think and recognise it.

- **Support:** Support the person experiencing online abuse. You can send them a direct message, share your favourite meme or send supportive pictures, and let them know they're not alone. You can be practical too: document the abuse and take screenshots of it. This will help deal with some of the impacts of online abuse and ensure it is easier to report.

- **Report:** Report the online abuse to the social media company, the authorities, or other organisations that may be able to provide support. Reporting abuse helps ensure organisations take action and understand the scale of the abuse taking place.

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Build a community of trusted individuals and organisations that you can lean on and celebrate with.

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FOR CHARITY LEADERS

As an employer, charities have a responsibility to look after the well-being of their employees and volunteers. These tips are focused on what you can do as an organisation to support your staff and community.

DIGITAL SELF-DEFENCE

- **Design Safety Into Your Strategy:** Proactively think about what conversations might be sparked by social media campaigns, and who might be impacted by them. Make a plan of what to do if things do go wrong.

- **Avoid Auto-Login For The Team:** Avoid auto-login options when managing multiple accounts or multiple people accessing one account. If your devices are compromised this will allow people to access any platform where you use auto-login.

- **Use A Password Manager:** Create unique, secure passwords for each account – password manager software will auto-generate these and store them securely. Check out **1Password** or **LastPass** for good password managers.

DIGITAL SELF-CARE

- **Set And Communicate Boundaries:** This enables you to give your best to your online presence while protecting your home life, and the privacy of you and your loved ones. Boundaries could include agreeing on what isn't acceptable on the organisation's social media, for how much time each staff member is responsible for the organisation's social media accounts and when it is OK to block or mute people.

- **Build A Community:** Build a community of trusted individuals and organisations that you can lean on and celebrate with. Think about how to create a community where you can support and uplift each other.

- **Create Good Internal Policies:** Create a simple policy that lets team members know it's okay to step away for a time or to pass the social media account they're managing to a colleague if online abuse is particularly triggering or harmful. This is especially important if people in your team hold multi-intersecting identities as they may already be impacted disproportionately by online abuse outside of work.

ONLINE ACTIVE BYSTANDER

- **Publish A Statement Of Solidarity:** Publish a statement of solidarity with the individual or organisation that is experiencing online abuse. If one of your staff or supporters is facing online abuse, having support from their organisation is vital. Publish a post underlining that you support them and that online abuse is unacceptable. Do not make reference to the content of the abuse or post screenshots, instead amplify the voice of the person receiving abuse.

- **Use Your Influence:** Use your influence when escalating the issue to social media companies. If they are not responding to abuse, make public posts calling on them to take action and asking your community to help highlight the issue.

- **Book Staff Training:** Encourage staff training on online safety and digital citizenship. You can **find out more here**.

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FOR SUPPORTERS AND INDIVIDUALS

People who support charities have a role to play too. They can help to amplify the voices of people experiencing online abuse, as well as be more at risk of abuse by speaking about the issues they support. These tips are relevant for supporters of charities, as well as being good practice in general for all individuals to consider.

DIGITAL SELF-DEFENCE

- **Two-factor Authentication:** It is important to enable two-factor authentication in settings for your work and personal email accounts. Each time you log in, you'll need a code that is sent to you via a text, phone call or an app) to make the log-in process doubly secure. It will also alert you if someone is trying to access your account, helping you to take action and change passwords quickly.

- **Keep Privacy Settings Updated:** Keep your privacy settings updated so only people you know can see your personal accounts. Remove anyone you are no longer in touch with.

- **Hide Your Location:** Hide your location by not using features such as Facebook check-in, Snapchat geofilters or Instagram location tags/stickers – wait until you have left the area. If you use these features, strangers can track your live location.

DIGITAL SELF-CARE

- **Talk To Someone:** If you experience online abuse, talk to someone you trust, such as a friend or family member, about what's happening and how it makes you feel. Ask them to listen and support you, not escalate the abuse or disclose more of your private information.

- **Take Time To Yourself:** Take time for yourself each day. Balance the challenges of being online by doing something you enjoy.

- **Use The Block and Report Functions:** Get comfortable using the block and report functions on apps like Facebook and Instagram, plus the mute and filter options on Twitter.

ONLINE ACTIVE BYSTANDER

- **Don't Engage:** Don't engage with abusive content. Instead, focus on how you can support the person experiencing online abuse.

- **Reply:** Reply to the original post, engaging with it as intended – this can help to take attention away from the abuse and focus back on what the author originally wanted to discuss.

- **Amplify:** Amplify the voice of the person experiencing the abuse and other marginalised communities, by sharing their post with a supportive message. This helps to ensure the voice of the original poster is louder than that of those being abusive and helps to address the silencing effect of online abuse.

> **Don't engage with abusive content. Instead, focus on how you can support the person experiencing online abuse.**

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WHAT NEXT?

We hope you have found this resource useful! If you'd like to support Glitch to continue making online spaces safer for all, please consider **donating** to us. To stay up to date on our work and the latest news about online safety, subscribe to **our mailing list here**.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Glitch Website: **https://glitchcharity.co.uk/resources/**

E-Safety Council: **https://www.esafety.gov.au/**

PEN America: **https://onlineharassmentfieldmanual.pen.org/**

Tips for parents: **https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11_18/**

Toxic Hush Action Kit: **https://www.informedopinionstoxichushkit.org/**

Heartmob: **https://iheartmob.org/resources**

⚠ A NOTE ON USING THIS RESOURCE

Although Glitch is a charity, we've made this resource freely available so we can reach and support as many people as possible. In return, we ask that you adhere to our Creative Commons license – you must not edit or alter this resource, nor use it for commercial gain. If you'd like permission to translate the toolkit, get in touch.

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