

FACEBOOK SUICIDE PREVENTION

2016 Nominet Trust 100 Winner

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2016

USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO HELP PREVENT SELF-HARM

By Facebook

Project URL: <https://www.facebook.com/help/594991777257121/>

Project Twitter: [@facebook](https://twitter.com/facebook)

Organisations Involved Facebook www.facebook.com

Forefront: Innovations in Suicide Prevention

Now Matters Now

Samaritans

Save.org

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- Health
- Safety & Security
- Internet
- Social Software

When Carrie Simmons looked up an old high school friend on Facebook, she saw a post that alarmed her: "thank you for everyone who tried to help me." She alerted a mutual friend, a police officer, whose colleague found their friend in a car with a pistol in his lap. Thankfully, the police were able to help the man and he is alive and well today.

Ms Simmons lives in California, USA, where suicides are on the increase. Palo Alto's two public high schools report suicide rates between four and five times the national average, which itself is at a 30-year high. Dr Dan Reiden, executive director of Save.org says that, "we are losing more people to suicide than breast cancer, car accidents or homicides."

Cyberbullying is strongly related to suicidal ideas. Facebook has been working on suicide-prevention tools for over 10 years, recognising that when depressed, people seek connections and reassurance online, and that in the US, 72% of the population uses the site to post frequent updates.

In 2015, the social media giant partnered with Now Matters Now, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, Save.org and Forefront to give Facebook users a tool

to identify, report and connect with those who show worrying signs of depression or suicidal thoughts.

A drop-down menu has been introduced for each post, which allows a concerned user to contact the post's author, contact another friend for support, or contact a suicide helpline. Facebook then reviews the post, and prompts the author with a pop-up that offers options to connect with others or support organisations.

In June this year, Facebook announced that the tool will be available in all languages for the first time, making it accessible to the site's 1.65 billion users around the world. To better understand how to help a friend in need, visit www.facebook.com/help

Image courtesy of Gianfranco Blanco

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