

Online Services: Ground Rules

Welcome to Beat's online services. We hope that you feel comfortable and safe here. To help with this, we have put together a set of ground rules, and we ask all users to read and be mindful of these while posting. All contributions made to Beat's online services are moderated within the following ground rules.

Keeping safe online

We want to ensure all our users are safe online and for this reason, the following will be removed:

- Any personal information about yourself or someone you know – e.g. surname, school names, contact details, phone numbers, email addresses, social network profiles.
- Specific locations – e.g. county, city, town, village, name of local landmark.
- Details of an event you are planning to, or have attended – e.g. gigs, open days, interviews, theatre. These can be spoken about in general terms such as 'I had an interview today'.
- Information that has been posted on other websites, blogs, social media etc.
- Discussions about meeting up face-to-face or on other forums outside of Beat's online services.

Remember that lots of little pieces of information can be pieced together to identify someone. It can be more useful to use general terms – e.g. 'I am studying at uni' rather than 'I am studying drama at uni'. We have found that the Met police website provides helpful information when considering your safety on the internet.

Posting Mindfully

We would encourage you to be as open and honest as you feel comfortable with, however we do ask that you are mindful of other users when posting about the following:

Eating disorders

Eating disorders are mental illnesses and we hope to provide a space

where the focus is on how people feel. For this reason, we will remove:

- Names of food and drink.
- Quantities of food.
- Names of diets.
- Height, weight or BMI calculations.
- Graphic descriptions of eating disordered behaviours – e.g. methods of purging.
- Detailed accounts of exercise.
- Competitive content, i.e. encouraging eating disorder behaviours.
- Content that could be considered pro-eating disorder.

Self-Harm

Please avoid detailed descriptions of self-harm techniques or descriptions of behaviour that others may find distressing. We will moderate content about self-harm if we feel it is necessary.

Suicide

Please avoid posting about plans or methods of suicide. You can talk about how you are feeling but the online support services are unable to provide crisis support – contact Samaritans, visit your GP or A&E if out of hours. We will moderate content about suicidal feelings or thoughts if we feel it is necessary.

Abuse

Please avoid graphic descriptions of abuse including physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, and neglect.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is fundamental to the services Beat provides. However, there are some exceptional circumstances where we may pass on information to the police or social services, for example if:

- We suspect a child may be at risk of significant harm.
- A service user is at risk of significant harm, either from themselves or others.
- A service user threatens or abuses our staff.

Posting Respectfully

As a supportive community, we suggest:

- Sharing your experiences as you feel comfortable – these can be both positive and negative feelings.
- Treat others in a way you would like to be treated yourself.
- Respecting the privacy of others – there may be some questions or threads that users may prefer not to participate in; respect their choice.

We ask that you avoid:

- Telling people what to do – we are all individuals and experiences can vary from person to person. Perhaps you could suggest what you have found helpful.
- Posting rude or offensive comments, which could include:
 - Homophobic remarks
 - Racially offensive remarks
 - Sexist remarks
 - Threatening or aggressive remarks
 - Swearing
- Creating multiple user names.
- Being personal when expressing a difference of opinion; address the conversation as a whole.
- Reliance upon one person for support – try to use the community as a whole. Conversations will be closed if others feel like they can't join in.
- Using a thread that hasn't been active in a long time – respect that other users may no longer want this thread running, and post a new thread with a similar topic.
- Spamming.

Posting Responsibly

When posting within any of Beat's online services you can talk about other people in your life, however we do ask that you are considerate and responsible in the content of your post. Be mindful of how people

may feel if they were to see what you have written.

Your experiences are valuable to the community and can be helpful to individuals. However, when posting, we do ask that you please avoid:

- Specifying treatment centres, staff, professionals.
- Referencing specific drugs and medication by name – however, you can talk in general terms e.g. ‘I am taking anti-depressants’.
- Posts that give diagnostic, medical or treatment advice.

We ask that direct references to media – e.g. TV programmes, newspaper articles – are only used when relevant to eating disorders – for example a storyline in a soap. Please remember the ground rules when making a reference.

You are welcome to share resources that you have found helpful e.g. self-help books. However, please be aware that anything that hasn't been written or reviewed by Beat will need to be checked by a moderator first – If we are unable to do this immediately we may remove the reference from posts until we have done so. Any resources that don't pass the review unfortunately can't be posted.

Please keep in mind

Our online services are designed for peer support, and so we will not post:

- Surveys questionnaires or research. Please also note that content from any thread can't be lifted and used in research in any form
- Direct quotes or information that the user doesn't own the copyright for – e.g. films, television programmes, magazines, newspapers, books, websites, music lyrics
- Libellous (insulting) comments – this can include references to celebrities.

If you have any questions about Beat's online services please email onlineservices@beateatingdisorders.org.uk.