

A guide to social media settings



More and more people are using digital technology to stay connected and get things done. Netsafe's job is to make it easier for people to be safe online. We have put this guide together to help you understand the settings on the main social media platforms and to help you understand the potential risks and what can be done about them.



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FACEBOOK

Facebook provides privacy setting options so that people have control over who can see the information they share.

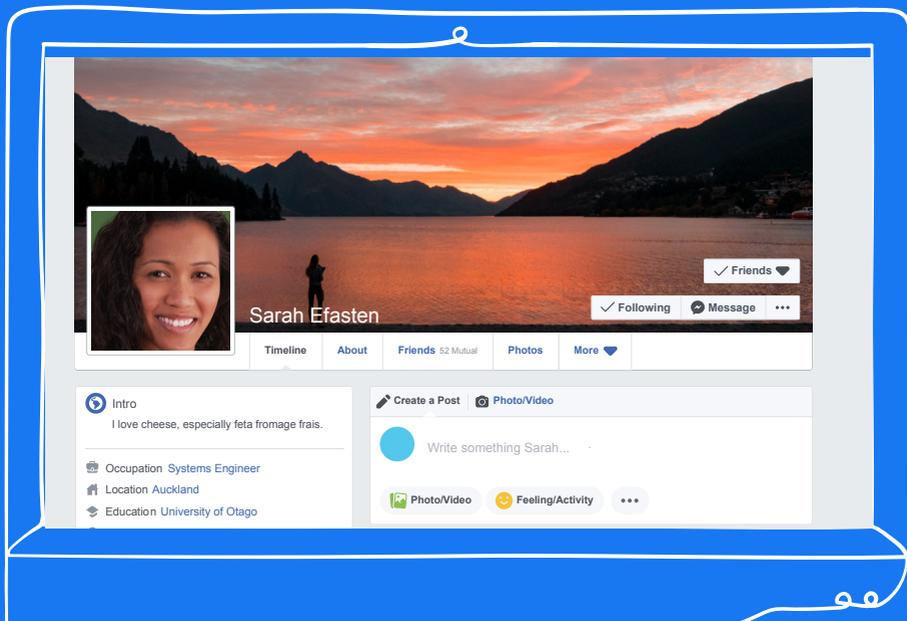
Learn more: facebook.com/help

Your name

The name you use on Facebook is always visible to others. Facebook's terms of service mean you can't use fake names, but you can use alternatives of your name such as a maiden name, nickname or a professional name.

Your profile picture

Your profile picture is available publicly. For extra privacy, consider using a profile photo without your face in it or a photo that doesn't include you. You can change the privacy settings on your old profile photos, so that they are not visible to the public.



Your phone number, email and date of birth

Think carefully about what information you share as any personal details can be used by someone to contact you (i.e. unwanted contact or harassment) or to try and impersonate you and access your online accounts.

If you'd like your friends to know your birthday, consider allowing friends to see the month and day of your birthday, but keep the year private.

Your posts

When you post to Facebook (for example updating your status) you can choose who sees the post. The Facebook privacy check-up tool will help you review and adjust the settings of who can see your posts. You should do a privacy check up regularly to make sure your information is still protected the way you want it to be.

Past posts

Facebook also lets you change the privacy settings of all of your past posts at once – so if your posts are visible to everyone on Facebook (also known as “public”) you can change the settings so that only friends can see them.



Comments and reactions

If you comment or react to (e.g. “like”) a post, photo or video from someone else, then other people will be able to see this. Who will see it will depend on the privacy settings of the person/page who originally posted it. For example, if a photo was posted by a friend and they allow only their own Facebook friends to see their posts then all of their Facebook friends will be able to see your comments.

If the photo was originally posted by a person/page who lets anyone see their posts (e.g. a news outlet or a clothing brand), then any comment you make will be visible to anyone using Facebook. Often if you comment on something public, it will show up in your Facebook friend’s “newsfeed”.

Your friends list

You can choose who can see the people you are friends with on Facebook. When you accept a request you automatically start following each other. You can change this privacy setting using [Facebook’s advice](#). When you post on Facebook, you can choose your audience:

- **Public:** Anyone including people not on Facebook
- **Friends:** (+ friends of anyone tagged): Your Facebook friends. If someone is tagged in the post, then the tagged person and their friends can see it. To change this, click the audience selector next to the post, select Custom, and uncheck Friends of those tagged
- **Only Me:** Only visible only to you. If you tag someone, they’ll be able to see it
- **Custom:** Share something with specific people or hide it from specific people

Blocking people

When you block someone, they won’t be able to see things you’ve posted on your profile, start a conversation with you or tag you in posts or invite you to like pages or events.

1. Click ▼ at the top right of Facebook and choose Settings.
2. Click **Blocking** in the left side menu.
3. In the **Block users’** section, enter the name of the person you want to block and click Block.
4. Select the specific person you want to block from the list that appears and click **Block > Block [name]**.

The person will not be notified that you have blocked them but may notice you have blocked them if they look at your profile. They may still be able to interact with you on some apps and groups.

Privacy settings

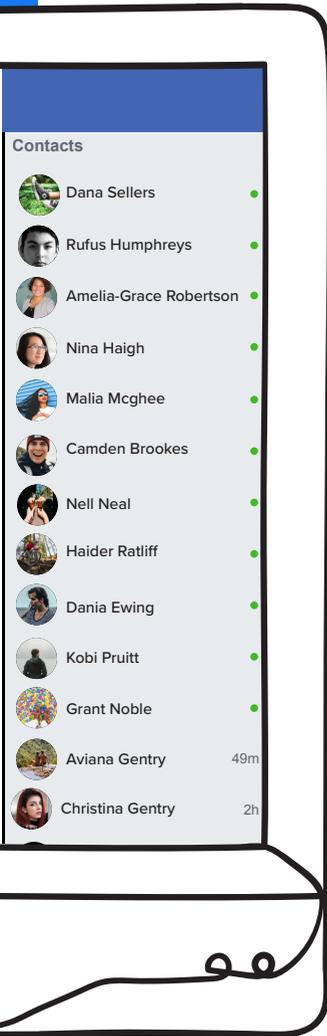
Use the [Privacy Checkup](#) to manage your privacy settings. A Privacy Checkup will help you review and adjust who sees your posts, who can see personal information on your profile and which settings you’ve enabled for apps you’ve logged into with Facebook.

Security settings

Use [Security Check Up](#) to review and add more security to your account.

Wellbeing options

If someone posts something that makes you concerned about their wellbeing, you can contact them directly and you can also report the post to Facebook. Serious reports like self-injury are prioritised by [Facebook](#). They send help and resources to those in distress. Visit facebook.com/safety/wellbeing.



INSTAGRAM

Instagram provides privacy setting options so that people have control over who can see the information they put on the platform.

Learn more: <https://help.instagram.com/>

Your username

The username you choose on Instagram is always visible to other people, but you don't have to use your name or personal details.

Your name

Instagram asks for your name when you set up your profile, but it's not a requirement for you to fill in this field. If you do include your name this will be visible, even if you have your profile set to 'Private'.

Website

Instagram has a field where you can add your website details to your profile. This section is optional and is visible even if you have your profile set to 'Private'.

Bio

Instagram has a section for you to include a short bio about yourself. This section is optional and if you do fill it in, it will be visible to anyone.

Your profile picture

Your profile picture is always public and something other people can see. You can change the privacy settings on your old profile photos, so that they are not visible to the public.

Your posts

Instagram allows you to choose whether you'd like to set up a 'Public' or 'Private' profile. When your profile is set to 'Public' it means that everyone will be able to see, comment and like your posts. When your profile is set to 'Private', only people who have requested to follow you and you have accepted will be able to see your posts.

Comments and reactions

If you comment or react to (e.g. "like") a post, photo or video from someone else, then other people will be able to see this. Who can see it will depend on the privacy settings of the person/page who originally posted it. For example, if it was posted by your friend and they allow only their own Instagram friends to see their posts, then all of their followers may see your comments and reactions.

If the post was originally made by a profile that is public (e.g. a new outlet or a clothing brand), then any comment you make will be visible to anyone on Instagram.

Your follower list

If you have your profile set as 'Public' then anyone will be able to see your full list of followers and people that you follow.

If you have your profile set to 'Private' only your followers will be able to see your full list of followers and people that you follow.

Activity status

People you follow or have direct conversations with can see when you were last active on Instagram. You can change the visibility of your activity status at any time. To change the visibility of your activity status:

- Go to your profile and tap.
- Tap **Settings > Privacy > Activity Status**.
- Tap next to **Show Activity Status** to turn off your activity status.

When you turn off your activity status, you won't be able to see anyone else's either. If you do change your settings or block someone you may alert them about your plans or be asked why you did it.



Hashtags

If your account is set to private and you add a hashtag (#hashtagexample) to your post, the post won't appear publicly on the corresponding hashtag page. Only your approved followers will be able to see your posts on hashtag pages or in Instagram direct messages.

Sharing to other networks

If someone with a private profile shares a photo or video to a social network (like Twitter, Facebook and so on) using Instagram, the image will be visible on that network and the permalink will be active. In other words, the photo will be publicly accessible by anyone who has access to its direct link/URLs to that post.

Blocking people

If you decide to block someone the person will not be notified that you have blocked them. They won't be able to find your profile, posts or story or message you directly. Their messages will still be available in your direct inbox, and their comments and likes will remain on your posts – you will have to delete any comments manually if you want to remove them.

If you are in a group message with this person, you will get a prompt asking if you would like to stay or leave the group. If you choose to stay, you'll be able to see this person's messages.

This person can still mention your username on Instagram, but this won't appear in your Activity. They will also be able to see any likes or comments on public posts.

1. Tap their username to go to their profile.
2. Tap **⋮** (iPhone/iPad/computer) or **⋮** (Android) in the top right.
3. Tap **Block** or **Unblock**.
4. Tap **Block** or **Unblock** again to confirm.

Privacy settings

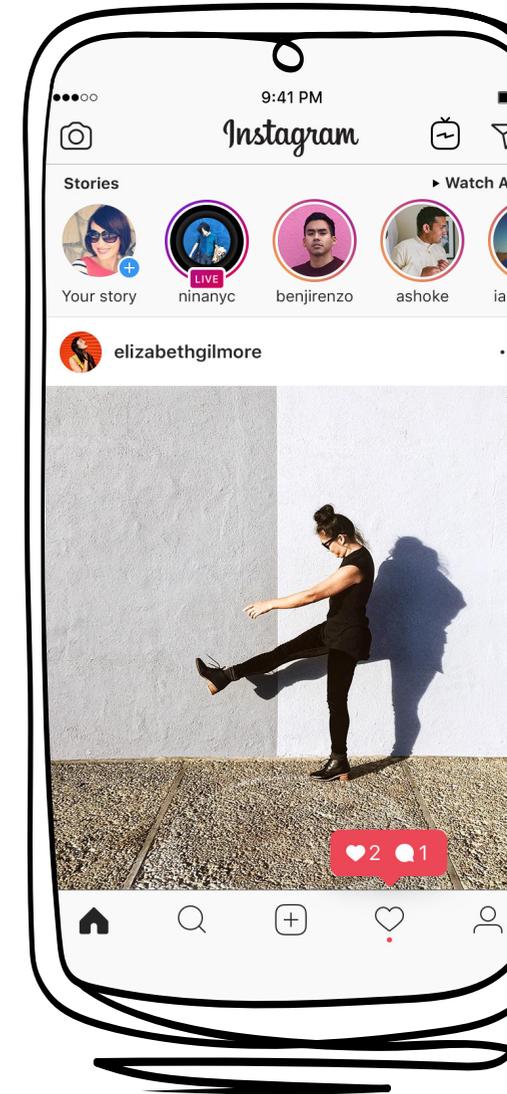
By default, anyone can view your profile and posts. You can make your account private so only followers you approve can see your posts.

1. Go to your profile
2. Click on ... or 'Privacy' to access your account settings
3. Turn on **Private Account**

Managing comments

You have the ability to control the comments you want to see:

1. **Turn off comments:** You can do this before you've posted using "Advanced Settings" and selecting "Turn off Commenting" or tap ... menu after posting to make changes.
2. **Delete and report abusive comments:** If you see an unwanted comment, swipe right on that comment to hide it. You can also report "Abusive Comments" and bios by swiping right.
3. **Custom keyword filter:** Instagram has created a keyword moderation tool that anyone can use so you can filter out comments containing words you don't want to see. This feature lets you list words you find offensive including phrases and emojis. Comments with these words will be hidden from your posts - you can choose your own list of words or use a default list.
4. **Comment Liking:** Instagram has added the ability to like comments by tapping the heart icon next to any comment. Liking lets you show support and encourages positivity throughout the community.



TWITTER

To help you protect your privacy on Twitter, we've put together some pointers together.

Learn more: <https://help.twitter.com/en>

Your username

The username you select is visible to other people – however you do not have to choose a username that gives away your name or personal details.

Your name

Twitter asks for your name when you set up your profile, however it is not a requirement for you to use your real name. If you do decide to include your name this will be visible, even if you have your profile set to 'Protect your Tweets' mode.

Website

Twitter has a field where you can add your website details to your profile. This section is optional when setting up your account and is visible even if you have your profile set to 'Protect your Tweets' mode.

Bio

Twitter has a section for you to include a short bio about yourself. This section is optional and is visible publicly even when your profile has been set to 'Protect your Tweets' mode.

Birth date

Twitter asks you to provide your date of birth when setting up your profile, however you can control who can see this. To be safe, it's generally best to

Location

Twitter asks you to provide your location when setting up a profile on the platform. Generally, it's best to keep this information as generic as possible by selecting a country rather than a city or town.

Your profile picture: Your profile picture is always public. For extra privacy, some people choose to use a profile photo without their face in it or a photo that doesn't include them – e.g. a favourite photo of the beach.

Your posts

Twitter allows you to choose whether your Tweets are publicly visible or whether you'd like them to only be visible to your selected followers using 'Protect your Tweets' mode. In 'Protect your Tweets' mode you will be sent 'follow' requests which you can either choose to allow or deny.

Comments

If you comment on a post from someone else, then other people will be able to see this. Who can see it will depend on the privacy settings of the person/page who originally posted it. If the post was originally posted by a Twitter profile who lets anyone see their posts (e.g. a news outlet or a clothing brand), then any comment you make will be visible.



Blocking People

If you decide to block someone that person will not be notified that you blocked them. However, if they do look at your account, they will see that they have been blocked. Blocking an account will stop someone from:

- Following you or being able to follow you
- Viewing or searching for your tweets in logged in
- Sending Direct Messages
- Viewing your followers or liked tweets

However, the person will be able to see your Tweets if they are reporting your account and your Tweets directly mention that person, or if they log out – it's for this reason that we recommend you make your account private as well.

1. Go to the profile page of the account you wish to block.
2. Click the more  icon on their profile page.
3. Select Block from the menu.
4. Click Block to confirm.

Privacy settings

Twitter accounts are automatically set to 'Public', which means anyone can see your Tweets. You can 'Protect' your Tweets so that only those who follow you can see them. Click on your profile picture next to the search bar, choose 'settings', 'security and privacy' and then select 'Protect my Tweets' to make your Twitter account private.

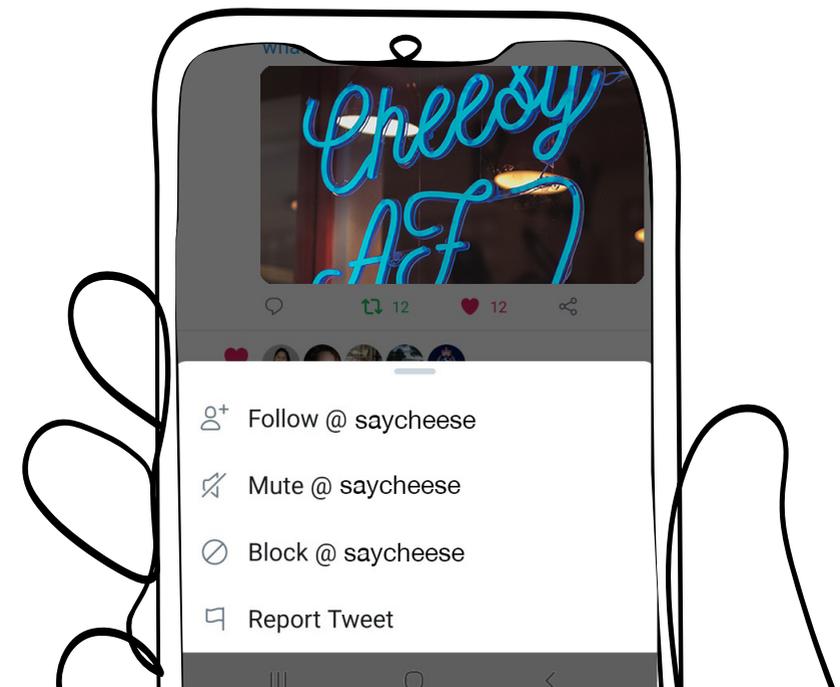
You also have the option to 'Protect your Tweets'. This means your Tweets won't be publicly available and will only be visible to those you allow to follow you.

Unwanted Tweets

If you are receiving unwanted Tweets, you can mute, block, and/or report the user by using Twitter's reporting tools. The tools can be found by clicking on the carat (^) in the top right-hand corner of the Tweet. If something has gone beyond the point of a personal conflict and has turned into credible threats, whether online or offline, you should contact law enforcement as they are in the best position to assess the threat and assist as necessary.

If you're receiving unwanted Tweets, you can unfollow and block the user.

1. Go to their Twitter profile and click the blue 'following' button to unfollow the user.
2. Click on the settings symbol next to the 'following' button.
3. Click 'block'.
4. To see a list of accounts you have blocked, go to your profile picture, click on 'settings' and choose 'blocked accounts'.



SNAPCHAT

Snapchat has several features that are worth understanding.

Learn more: <https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB>

Your username

The username you select on Snapchat is always visible to other people. Although you do not have to use a username that gives away any personal details.

Your name

Snapchat asks for your name when you set up your profile, however it's not a requirement for you to use it. If you do decide to include your name this will be visible even if you have your profile set to private mode.

Birth date

Snapchat asks you to provide your date of birth when setting up your profile. A birthday cake emoji will show next to your name on your birthday for other people to see, but you can choose to disable this under "Birthday" in settings.

To access your Snapchat settings, click your avatar on the top left of your screen. Then click the red cog icon on the top right of your screen.

Mobile number and email address

Snapchat asks for this information when you set up your account but it's not visible to anyone on the platform.

Screenshots

Snapshots disappear once the recipient has seen it, but you can take screenshots. If someone screenshots a Snap, the person who sent it will get a notification to let them know

Privacy Settings

To see who can view your Snaps and Stories, or to change who can view them tap on the ghost image on the camera screen, then tap the gear icon in the upper-right corner of the screen and scroll down to the 'Who Can' section.

For Snaps: tap the 'Contact Me' option and choose either:
'Everyone' – This allows anyone to send you Snaps (even strangers).
'My friends' – Only your friends are able to send you Snaps.

For Stories: tap the 'View My Story' option and choose either:
'Everyone' – This allows anyone to send you Snaps (even strangers).
'My Friends' – Only your friends are able to view your Story
'Custom' – This allows you to choose which friends can see your stories.

Snap Map

Snap Map allows you to view Snaps of events like sporting events, celebrations and breaking news, from around the world.

If you and a friend follow one another, you can share your locations with each other so you can see where they are and what's going on around them. You are able to choose who can view your location or enter 'Ghost Mode' so no one can see your location. You can access these settings by clicking the white cog icon on the top right of the map.

There are always potential risks with sharing your location with other people, so it is important to think carefully about who you're sharing information with.



Your stories

Adding images or videos to your Story creates a series of Snaps that stay on Snapchat for 24 hours. You can choose to have your Story visible to all Snapchatters, just your Snapchat friends or a group of your choosing.

To access these settings, click on the person icon in the top left corner, then click the red cog icon in the top right corner and scroll down to Who can > View My Story.

Who can send to you: Snapchat allows you to choose who is able to send you Snaps. You can choose between 'Everyone' – this allows anyone to send you Snaps (even strangers), or 'My Friends' – only people you have confirmed as friends are able to send you Snaps.

To access these settings, click on the person icon in the top left corner, then click the red cog icon in the top right corner and scroll down to Who can > Contact Me.

Blocking people

When you block someone on Snapchat the person will not be notified that you have blocked them. They also won't be able to:

- View your story or charms
- Send you snaps or chats
- Search for your username

You can block someone by:

1. Swiping right to go to the Friends screen
2. Tapping and holding on a friend's name
3. Tapping 'More'
4. Tapping 'Block'

GENERAL ONLINE SAFETY TIPS

As part of a pattern of abusive behaviour, someone may use technology to hurt, control and monitor their partner or someone close to them. These tips are also useful to consider:



If you think your partner is monitoring your online accounts or sending messages as you, think about creating accounts you can use for sensitive communications from a safe device.



Use a password on each online account. Try to use a different password and ones that are 15 characters long - or can't be easily guessed by someone who knows you well.



Implement two-factor authentication (2FA). This is an extra layer of protection for your online accounts. It makes it harder for others to access your account – even if they have your password.



Use trusted WiFi connections or mobile data to access online accounts and when making payments.



Always lock your screen when you finish using your device and logout of your account when using a public computer.



Changing your account or profile settings may alert your partner that you know they are monitoring you so think carefully about the changes you make.

40%

of Kiwis have received an unwanted digital communication in the last year, according to Netsafe research. This includes bullying, abuse and harassment.

DEALING WITH BULLYING OR ABUSE



If the bullying, abuse and harassment is very serious or ongoing, try to screenshot the content and keep a log of the activity. Contact Netsafe for free support or technical assistance at any stage.

There is also a law called the Harmful Digital Communications Act that might help you. The Act aims to help people targeted online with harmful content and covers any digital communications including text, emails or social media. The content can be posted publicly or sent privately.

There are **10 communication principles** that guide how to communicate online. A digital communication should not:

1. disclose sensitive personal facts about an individual
2. be threatening, intimidating, or menacing
3. be grossly offensive to a reasonable person in the position of the affected individual
4. be indecent or obscene
5. be used to harass an individual
6. make a false allegation
7. contain a matter that is published in breach of confidence
8. incite or encourage anyone to send a message to an individual for the purpose of causing harm to the individual
9. incite or encourage an individual to commit suicide
10. denigrate an individual by reason of colour, race, ethnic or national origins, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability

Netsafe's job is to help resolve breaches of the 10 communication principles. There are also criminal penalties in the Act for more serious offences. Netsafe's job is to help resolve breaches of the 10 communication principles. For more info visit netsafe.org.nz/what-is-the-hdca

Screenshot content

If you are the target of online bullying, abuse, harassment or criminal behaviour, you may want to keep a record of what is going on. Information you could collect includes screenshots, the times and dates of messages, if they were sent to or seen by anyone else and the impact they had on you. If you have an anonymous email account, consider sending the evidence to it so that someone else (such as your partner) cannot find and erase it.

While it may seem like deleting the content is the quickest solution, it may be useful to ask Netsafe or a law enforcement agency for advice. Some quick tips to keep in mind includes:

- **Record the URL or web address:** Write down or copy the whole address. Make sure you get the full address, even if it looks like a random jumble of letters and numbers.
- **Keep a copy of emails, texts and/or direct messages:** Copy addresses, times, and dates they were sent.
- **Take a screenshot:** This is useful to keep as a record in case the content is deleted from the web – if it is deleted from the web then the URL you have recorded won't show the content. The exception to this is if you think the content may be "objectionable". Objectionable material involves graphic content containing children, animals, dead people, cruelty and severe violence. If you think this is the case, **DO NOT** copy the content.

GET HELP



If you need advice with anything online – from online bullying and abuse to nudes being shared without your permission – Netsafe can help. Netsafe’s service is available to everyone in New Zealand and is free, confidential, and available seven days a week.

You can contact the team in four ways:

Call toll-free 0508 NETSAFE (0508 638 723)

Email help@netsafe.org.nz

Fill out a report form netsafe.org.nz/report

Text ‘Netsafe’ to 4282

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, please call 111.

Some of the other places you can get support from are:



Shine – Call 0508 744 633. A free helpline to provide support for people who have experienced abuse by a partner or family member, people who use violence and want to make a change, and people who are worried about a friend or family member.



Women’s Refuge – Call 0800 REFUGE or 0800 733 843. A free support service to people who have been victims of domestic or family violence.



Help (Auckland) – Call 09 623 1700 or email info@helpauckland.org.nz. A free 24 hour helpline to support victims of sexual assault.



Help (Wellington) – Call 04 801 6655 or contact online. A free 24-hour helpline to support victims of sexual assault.



Youthline – Call 0800 376 633, Free TXT 234 or email talk@youthline.co.nz. Youthline provides a free counselling service for young people.



Lifeline Suicide Crisis Helpline – Call 0508 TAUTOKO (0508 828 865). A free 24-hour suicide crisis helpline operated by trained counsellors.



Need to Talk – Free text or call 1737. A free 24-hour call or text help line operated by trained counsellors.



Rape Prevention Education – Contact online. Provides education and information to prevent sexual violence.

