Tip Sheet For Individuals

#NotOk

Stand Up for Journalism and Democracy

It's important to find the balance—protecting yourself, recognising this can cause more work but that it shouldn't always be about you providing the solutions. This online harm is not your fault. It should not come with the job. Your journalism is important, but not as important as your wellbeing. You have a right to feel safe at work. Just as it is helpful for journalists who go to war zones to have resources, training and equipment to keep them safe, it is helpful for those on the frontlines of digital harassment to take steps to ensure they can do their jobs effectively and without undue risk and harm.

Before

Practice good digital hygiene. Limit the personal info you share online (and be aware others in your networks might share info too). Consider doxing yourself, Googling your phone number and using Delete Me to erase personal information.

Consider how your personal social media accounts intersect with your professional social media activity. And be aware that things that are posted on personal accounts may affect professional ones.

Use robust passwords and change them regularly. Do you have privacy settings in place for social media platforms? Consider installing two-factor authentication.

During

Tell someone you trust about the abuse. Speak with your line manager or someone else you trust about the support you need (including safety support).

Don't second guess how far online harassment has to go before reporting it. It's not okay and if it is hurting you and your work then report it. Don't wait until it gets even more aggressive and intense.

Step away (and know you have permission to do so from managers, but also give yourself permission).

If you can, take a break from your accounts. Have someone you trust monitor them.

Remember: this may feel personal, but often it isn't. And it stems from the virtual world, but is real.

After

Know where to access support, be that through people/colleagues you trust or specialized mental health support.

Know this might be cumulative, and that the build up of pressures may mean you feel triggered by something even after the incident is over.

Consider taking time away or taking on different assignments/stories less likely to trigger online harassment, as a counter to what you have been experiencing.

Return to work and social media when you are ready.

Tip Sheet For News Leaders

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Stand Up for Journalism and Democracy

Before

Those most marginalized by and in mainstream media are most at risk of online harm, such as women, racialized people and LGBTQ2S+ people.

Online harm should not be considered a normal part of a journalist's job. However, talking about it needs to be normalized. People may not always feel comfortable talking, so it's important everyone has someone they can trust, whether a peer or manager.

Familiarize yourselves with technologies your company has to filter harassment, as well as specific emails where people can report abuse. Communicate these to your staff, and include these tools in your planning processes when you commission stories.

A company database of previous attacks can help identify themes, stories and targets of harassment. This can inform a risk assessment before commissioning stories, which is an important step for all stories where there is the threat of harassment.

Speak with your teams about how their personal social media activities intersect with their professional social media activities and the potential impacts in terms of online harassment. This includes past activity which might be used against them.

During

When marginalized people are targeted, media plurality is threatened. Online harm can result in self-censorship. Often silencing journalists is a motivation of attackers.

Online harm hurts. It can impact people's emo-tional wellbeing and spill over into offline environ-ments. Show people you support them, and know what systems are in place if they need additional help physically or psychologically, and recognize when you need to escalate.

Create and promote spaces where people feel safe to report their experiences, without fear of repris-als to their career or reputation. Listen actively and with empathy. Plan follow-up conversations and ensure you show people you appreciate their work. Also consider the other stressors they may be under and ensure your attempt to help doesn't overwhelm.

Remind people that you are there to support them, and that they are not to blame. Support them to take steps themselves or take steps with their permission on their behalf, including reporting abuse to law enforcement.

Encourage people to report harassment as it happens and not to wait until they feel it has reached a particular and indefinable level of severity.

After

Consider offering those affected by online harm time off, but ensure this doesn't feel like a punish-ment, so recognize these are nuanced discussions.

Sometimes an affirming alternative to time off can be a reassignment to cover stories that are less likely to trigger online abuse.

Remind them of the support that is available to them through peer networks, employee assistance programs or other processes.

Follow up; normalizing conversations makes it more likely that people will share their experiences.