

Facebook Introduces Mental Health Resource Hub

Ahead of World Mental Health Day on Oct. 10, Facebook announced a new mental health hub on its app that has information and support for stress, grief, self-harm and suicide.

In its efforts to populate the app with reliable information about important topics, Facebook previously added similar hubs for information about the Covid-19 pandemic and the upcoming U.S. election in November.

Additional mental health resources will also be added to Messenger, Instagram and WhatsApp.

Facebook said the new features build on work they have previously done with the World Health Organization (WHO), the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Kids Help Phone and It's OK to Talk. The WHO, which already had a WhatsApp chatbot, is adding its "digital stress management guide" for users needing help.

Facebook also expanded its partnership with Crisis Text Line to add support on the Messenger app, and added new well-being guides on Instagram, including one directed at men and one for teens.

The company also announced it greenlit a new talk show on Facebook Watch, hosted by actor Taraji P. Henson and Tracie Jade Jenkins, who directs Henson's Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation. The show, which has the working title, "Peace of Mind with Taraji," aims to "shine a spotlight on the challenging mental health issues facing us today," particularly in the Black community, and debuts later this year.

Social media companies have historically come under fire over their addictive properties, something that was recently highlighted in a Netflix documentary called *The Social Dilemma*. At the time, Facebook refuted the documentary's critiques and pointed to changes it made, including updating news feed rankings to prioritize "meaningful social interactions and deprioritize things like viral videos."

A Facebook spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment about whether the new features were expedited in response to the documentary's criticism.

Facebook also released a new report in partnership with the Aspen Institute, focused on "loneliness, social connection, technology and how they all intersect," and a forthcoming series of roundtable discussions about these topics.

Facebook also acknowledged a common critique of Instagram, too, that on the platform "people can feel a pressure to present a perfect image of themselves." To address this, they said they are "conducting research to better understand the tipping point between inspiration and feeling good—and the pressure to live up to a certain standard."



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