

Pinterest wants you to take a deep breath, literally

Pinterest isn't your typical social network – for starts, its 250 million users spend their time creating collections of things that make them happy, rather than, say, competing to spread news that might end up making someone sad. But when Pinterest users search the platform for something dreary anyhow, the company doesn't have qualms about stepping in.

Today, Pinterest has revealed a new set of “emotional well-being activities” that it will automatically suggest to user who search for phrases that signal that they're undergoing some anxiety or stress or otherwise feeling bad. And yes – one of those exercises, developed in partnership with the Stanford School of Medicine's Brainstorm lab, literally asks Pinterest users to take some deep breaths.

Here's what that looks like in GIF form:

It's hardly the first time that Pinterest has steered user searches in a more positive direction, by the way: as *Wired* notes, if you type in phrases like “suicide” or “bulimia,” “mutilation” or “cutting,” you'll be pointed towards a message like “Are you struggling with an eating disorder? Help is available” or even find yourself facing down a message that directs you to the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (which, by the way, is 1-800-273-8255).

Pinterest is also the platform that decided to simply stop surfacing search results to controversial topics filled with bad information, like “vaccines”.

In this case, Pinterest product manager Annie Ta told *Wired* that the company has a formal name for this idea – “compassionate search” – and says the company believes it may fill an actual user need. “We didn’t just decide to throw this in the app,” Ta told the publication. “We decided to put it in the app because people are already searching for these things so much.”

Pinterest doesn’t want to be seen as a social network, which makes sense considering how many don’t think social networks are necessarily good for the world these days, and can even be dangerous and depressing. But maybe that’s why tiny steps like this can feel so refreshing.

<https://www.theverge.com/2019/7/22/20706357/pinterest-stress-anxiety-social-media-exercises-worry-compassionate-search>