



# **Lifeline Social Media and Website Policy**

2017

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# Introduction

## 1.1 Document Purpose

This policy provides all Lifeline employees, volunteers and supporters with the corporate requirements and guidance to practically apply, develop and manage any Lifeline website and/or social media channels.

This document establishes guidelines and processes to best manage website and social media communications with the best interests of the Lifeline Brand and reputation in mind and in adherence to the Brand and Communication Guidelines and Trade Mark Licence Agreements.

## 1.2 Scope

Websites required to adhere to this policy include those using any form of the Lifeline Brand. This includes any website promoting a Lifeline Centre, shop, service or campaign and is developed by or on behalf of Lifeline Australia, a Lifeline Centre, Lifeline Shop, volunteer or third party (e.g. Corporate Partner).

Social media includes websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or participate in social networking.

Examples include:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Pinterest
- YouTube
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- Blogs
- Sites including user participation and User-Generated Content (UGC).

## 1.3 Audience

This policy applies to everyone who is employed, volunteers, or represents Lifeline.

## 1.4 Related Documents

Title
<a href="#">Lifeline Brand and Communication Guidelines</a>
<a href="#">Lifeline Australia Media Policy</a>
<a href="#">Social media guidelines, generic response templates &amp; Q&amp;A</a>

## 2. Background

Lifeline across the network has a well-established digital presence and an extensive social media footprint. Digital channels are currently used to complement existing communication and marketing activities, providing considerable opportunity to increase awareness and utilise innovative technology to reach more help seekers and supporters.

## 3. Guiding Principles

This policy also aims to establish parameters and outline the expected behaviour for people who do not officially represent Lifeline online, but could, through their behaviour, impact on the reputation of Lifeline, our Brand and our services.

Lifeline employees, volunteers and supporters are encouraged to participate in social media. Whenever Lifeline employees, volunteers or supporters are interacting on social media or developing a website, whether in an official or personal capacity (see Section Four (4) for definitions), the following guiding principles should be adhered to:

- I will not criticise clients, colleagues, Lifeline or related Government policy
- I will respond to others' opinions respectfully and professionally
- I will not do anything that breaches my terms of employment
- I will not harass, bully or intimidate
- I will acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly
- I will disclose conflicts of interest where I am able
- I will not knowingly post inaccurate information
- I will link to online references and original source materials directly
- I will be polite, considerate and fair
- I will always ensure my activity does no harm
- I will champion Lifeline and its services

## 4. Definitions

### 4.1 Official Use

Official use is when an employee, volunteer or supporter is using social media as a representative of Lifeline with permission from their appropriate delegate. Posts from an official '*Lifeline*' account, i.e. not a distinct individual person must:

- Comply with Lifeline's ethics and the guiding principles stipulated within Section Three (3) of this policy

- Implement the naming conventions outlined in the Lifeline Brand and Communication Guidelines
- Do no harm
- Not promote individual staff and/or volunteer businesses, personal financial ventures, or individual political candidates, preferences or Parties.

## 4.2 Personal Use

When an employee, volunteer or supporter is using social media or developing digital content in a personal capacity rather than officially representing Lifeline.

Should a personal website or social media account bear an affiliation to Lifeline in any capacity or that individual can be traced back to the organisation through their online presence these accounts must:

- Comply with Lifeline's ethics and the guiding principles stipulated within Section Three (3) of this policy
- Do no harm
- Not promote individual staff and/or volunteer businesses, personal financial ventures, or individual political candidates, preferences or Parties.

Under no circumstances should crisis support be offered via personal accounts. Social media is not an official or endorsed crisis support service. Identifying yourself or using your skills as a crisis supporter via individual accounts is prohibited. Please use generic help seeking messages or re-post content from National Office social media channels. For examples of appropriate messaging, please refer to the Social media guidelines, generic response templates and Q&A document.

## 4.3 Naming Conventions

All uses of the Lifeline trademark online and in social media must be differentiated based on geographical location to ensure the public can find and obtain information most relevant to them.

For example:

### **Facebook:**

- ForsterLifelineShop
- Lifeline Shop Newcastle and Hunter
- Lifeline Shop Ipswich
- Lifeline Treasures Gold Coast
- Lifeline Midcoast
- Lifeline Vintage South West Victoria

### Twitter:

- @Lifeline\_ACT
- @Lifeline\_BrokenHill
- @Lifeline\_TopEnd etc

### Website Domain Names:

- [www.lifelinealburywodonga.org.au/Lifeline\\_OpShop.php](http://www.lifelinealburywodonga.org.au/Lifeline_OpShop.php)
- [www.lifeline-h2h.org.au/bookfair.html](http://www.lifeline-h2h.org.au/bookfair.html)

The Lifeline Trade Mark Licence Agreement (please refer to section 3.3 (b) below) also outlines that prior to any Centre or Retail Outlet registering a social media account or website domain name, prior written permission from National Office is required.

The section reads:

*The Licensee must not:*

*(b) except with LA's prior written consent, apply for registration...of any trade mark, domain name, business name or company name that incorporates signs, logos or words the same as, substantially identical or deceptively similar to the Trade Marks.*

Written permission is required to ensure:

- Consistency across naming conventions to differentiate Centres/services based on geographical locations (if a generalised name is used by a particular Centre i.e Lifeline Shop this does not help the public find their local Lifeline Shop)
- Centres are not disadvantaged by another Centre securing a generalised domain or social media account name like Lifeline Shop, Lifeline Vintage etc that does not distinguish them locally from other Centres, who may be offering a similar/identical service and indirectly competing with each other.
- Using localised identifiers like a Centre name also ensures members of the public utilising search engines like Google will find their most relevant local Centre/service.

Generalised products or services, social media accounts/domain names like Lifeline Shop, Lifeline Vintage, Lifeline Retail, Lifeline Op Shop, and Lifeline etc are to be used to represent these services/products/brands on a national scale only and the relevant registrations of these accounts established by National Office only.

## 4.4 Naming Conventions

An official account (blog, website, social media account) that represents Lifeline should stipulate this within its biography page or account description. An official social media page and the development of a new website must be sanctioned by the Lifeline Australia National Marketing Manager, Centre Manager or their designated delegate. The account must carry the following, or a version of the following statement:

“This is the official account/page/etc for Lifeline WA/Melbourne/etc” followed by a brief description of Lifeline and the purpose of the account relating to the particular social media platform. For example, on twitter, it might say “Lifeline Canberra is a crisis support organisation and uses this account to promote help-seeking messages within the community”.

## 4.5 Personal Accounts

Unofficial, personal accounts can be set up by employees, volunteers or supporters of Lifeline and an affiliation to the organisation identified if the following is undertaken:

1. It should stipulate that the opinions expressed are the persons' own, and not that of Lifeline
2. It should state a disclaimer that reposting, 'likes', retweeting, etc do not represent the views of Lifeline.

For example; twitter bio: “Likes apples and fishing, interested in politics and the news, works for Lifeline, opinions my own, RTs not endorsement”.

# 5. Permissions

## 5.1 Lifeline Australia

Within the National Office, the National Engagement Team is responsible for all official use of Lifeline social media and websites as defined in 4.1.

Personal use as defined in 4.2 is up to the individual employee, volunteer or supporter, however individuals will be held accountable for their actions on social media, and will be disciplined if required, according to the relevant policies and codes of conduct of the various Lifeline entities and their individual employment agreements.

## 5.2 Centres

Lifeline Centres have jurisdiction over their digital operations including social media. However, Centres have an obligation to the network to ensure they comply with this policy and ensure they keep Lifeline Australia abreast of any new websites being developed or social media platforms they are active in. Centres have a responsibility to ensure that social media is maintained, that best practice is used and that staff are adequately trained to use this medium. The National Marketing Team at Lifeline Australia will help provide advice and

assistance in relation to social media and website best practice via [marketing@lifeline.org.au](mailto:marketing@lifeline.org.au)

### 5.3 Individuals

Employees, volunteers or supporters of Lifeline do not have permission to post content on official Lifeline sites. They can, however, repost, retweet etc Lifeline posts, material or comment without substantial or meaningful change as part of showing their affiliation or support for the organisation.

## 6. Inappropriate Use

Inappropriate use of social media includes, (but not limited to);

- Conducting private business using Lifeline websites or social media channels
- Using discriminatory, defamatory, abusive or otherwise objectionable language
- Stalking, bullying, trolling or marginalising any individual or group
- Accessing or uploading pornographic, gambling or illegal content, including extreme images of graphic content (blood and gore etc) or information regarding activity relating to firearms, bombs, terrorism etc
- Accessing sites that promote hatred or extreme/fundamental beliefs and values
- Direct political affiliation, unless an individual is running for election (but only on a personal account)
- Excessive debate on public policy, in particular surrounding the mental health and suicide prevention arena (unless in an official capacity)
- Uploading information of a confidential nature, especially in regards to Lifelines services or clients
- Hacking or attempting to infiltrate the systems of Lifeline or another organisation
- Criticising or denigrating Lifeline, or other organisations, and our/their employees, volunteers or supporters
- Activity that interferes with work commitments
- Activity that uses excessive bandwidth, either uploading or downloading, within the Lifeline ICT network
- Paid endorsement of any kind, including in kind services or gifts
- Activity that brings Lifeline or the person's professionalism or ability to act in a professional manner into disrepute

It is the duty of everyone affiliated with Lifeline to alert either the National Engagement Team, or Centre Manager, to any inappropriate content they may come across.



## 7. Policy Breach

Misuse of social media or any digital channel can have serious consequences for Lifeline, and consequently that misuse can have serious consequences in terms of disciplinary action for staff and volunteers. Centres and Lifeline Australia are responsible for ensuring adherence to this policy by their staff and volunteers. This includes undertaking appropriate risk assessment and performance management or disciplinary action, of any suspected or identified breach.

In the event of serious misconduct, disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal may occur.

## 8. Delegations

### 8.1 Lifeline Australia

The Chief Engagement Officer and the National Marketing Manager have primary delegation over website and social media development and management by National Office.

### 8.2 Centres

The Centre Manager has delegation for all official Social Media activity undertaken by the Centre, with a secondary delegation falling to either their official communications personnel or their Board Chair.

### 8.3 Others

Individuals who undertake personal activity in social media channels are expected to self-moderate and use a common sense approach, always ensuring they are in line with the requirements of this social media policy. Advice can be sought from the National Marketing Team at Lifeline Australia.

### 8.4 Parent Brands/Members

Parent brands that run Lifeline services are able to have official Lifeline accounts. These accounts are not to be used for the direct promotion of parent brand business or parent brand activity. Endorsement is acceptable, so long as the association between the two parties is clear and articulated. Lifeline Australia maintains the right to request a suspension of the official Lifeline account run by the parent brand if these requirements are not adhered to. Lifeline Australia also maintains the right to request material be removed from any website or social media channel if these requirements are not adhered to.

## 9. Crisis Support Through Social Media

It is currently inappropriate for Lifeline to undertake crisis support through social media channels. Social media is a communication and engagement channel not a service channel and is not resourced or monitored 24/7. That is why we recommend disabling private messaging functions on social media channels, like Facebook for example, to close this method of contact from the public. To

ensure the public understand social media is a communication channel and not a help seeking service all official social media accounts, blogs or pages should direct help seekers to relevant services and clearly communicate the following, or a similar message.

“Lifeline does not monitor this account/page/blog 24/7 and we are unable to provide crisis support through this medium/blog/platform/account/etc. Crisis support is available 24 hours by calling 13 11 14 or our online Chat service.”

In the case where crisis outreach occurs through a social media platform, please refer to the Social media guidelines, generic response templates and Q&A document for suggested responses and guidance.

## **10. Complaints Through Social Media**

Complaints or negative comments regarding Lifeline will occur through social media channels. Both official and personal users of social media are discouraged from arguing or refuting complaints or negative feedback through social media channels. This behaviour can antagonise or fuel further attacks on Lifeline’s services, brand and/or reputation.

In the event of a complaint or negative comment about Lifeline it is important to respond to the comment as soon as possible but respond with a generic message. Please refer to the Social media guidelines, generic response templates and Q&A for example responses to varying complaints.

## **11. Deleting Posts**

Social media is fluid, two-way, busy and often self-regulating. Social media can be used to disseminate information, but should be considered a form of two-way communication and a vehicle to listen to ‘wider’ community views.

Organisations that heavily control content on their social media pages, blogs and accounts, mostly through the deletion of questionable or disapproving content, significantly reduce the impact and usefulness, of social media as a channel for information distribution.

Lifeline will not delete posts that are complaints, or negative, except when they breach any of the conditions outlined for employees, volunteer and supporters in the ‘inappropriate use’ Section Six (6) above.

## **12. Contact Us**

If you have any questions about applying this policy or require any advice please do not hesitate to contact:

**Lifeline National Marketing Team**  
marketing@lifeline.org.au