

Considerations concerning ethical behavior online

1. For victims and their families, it can make a very harrowing and tragic experience even more traumatic to see the distressful event being widely circulated on social media by strangers.
2. Everyone has the right to privacy and this right should be respected under all situations and circumstances.
3. Studies have confirmed that exposure to violence onscreen and online desensitizes children and youth to other people's sufferings and increases children and adults' aggression and hostility.
4. Media exposure to violence and aggression stimulates aggressive impulses and primes children to act aggressively. For older children, the impact is subtler and more insidious. Even for adults, constant exposure can lead them to think that what they see is the natural state of things.

Think before you Click, Like or Share

1. Social media posts depicting crisis situations can put lives in even more danger than what is already inherent in the situation. Care should be taken to not intensify violence or obstruct efforts to resolve the situation.
2. Posts should avoid inflicting shock, pain and trauma to families and loved ones of victims.
3. Persons affected by tragedy or grief should be treated with sensitivity and respect and allowed to suffer their grief in private.
4. The identity of victims should not be announced until the situation has been clarified, settled or resolved, or only when names have been confirmed by credible sources of information. The names of deceased victims should be disclosed only after their next of kin have been notified.
5. Care and discretion should also be exercised in disclosing the identities of victims by face or by name, so as to avoid harming their or their families' safety and security.
6. Photos showing the faces of victims (especially of violent crimes) should be pixelated. Photos should be based on common decency and respectful of the victims.
7. There should be good reasons why photos of victims are shown. Do the positive reasons for publishing the photos outweigh the possible negative reaction they will elicit?
8. Children's privacy and identity should be protected at all times.
9. The right to privacy of individuals must be respected.

10. Images of deceased people should be treated with dignity and respect.
11. Materials showing arrested or detained persons being physically assaulted or verbally abused in a manner that demeans or humiliates them should not be shared casually.
12. Coverage and posts should avoid language that perpetuates stereotypes in terms of gender, ethnicity, race, religion, etc.

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