

Self-harm behavior

Content promoting cutting, starving or suicide reaches a wide audience in the social web. The idealizing way in which self-harm behavior is presented online fascinates young people; in the virtual community they easily release their inhibitions and encourage copycat behavior. Most platform operators are still not aware of this. They are challenged to remove illegal content more quickly and develop preventive concepts for a better protection of young people. Since mobile internet access to this content leaves many of those affected on their own there is a further need to provide support.

Read the latest findings in the paper [Promotion of self-harm behavior in the social web](#).

Pro-Ana and pro-Mia – Promotion of eating disorders

Many websites euphemistically referred to as 'pro-Ana' (anorexia nervosa) and 'pro-Mia' (bulimia nervosa) glorify eating disorders. Slogans like 'Being thin is more important than being healthy' or fiction-writing like 'letters from Ana' idealize extremely skinny persons.

Eating disorders are one of the most chronic diseases among young people. Encouraging those affected to go on with their lifestyle choice could lead to life-threatening effects.

The assessment of the content is made according to the [criteria of the KJM](#). E.g., content is endangering to young people if it presents self-destructive behavior in a single sided, uncritical and unreflected way and encourages copycat behavior.

Delete posts and support those affected

To protect young people, harmful and endangering content must be deleted quickly; and in order not to leave those affected on their own, platform operators

Cutting and suicide – trivializing self-harm behavior

Self-harm behavior is a growing trend on the internet. Self-mutilation or skin-cutting in various forms are glorified as a new lifestyle choice. Images of scars or open wounds can lower barriers and stimulate harmful behavior. Nomination challenges are trending in the social web. Not only harmless charity challenges (e.g. ice bucket challenge) get new followers, but also dangerous activities. Social pressure specifically makes young people put up with injuries.

Users going through a life crisis mainly exchange information and their experiences about suicide in relevant forums and communities. Next to information about preventive measures there are many instructions, announcements and 'rendezvous' to commit suicide.

Raise awareness among parents, educators and the public

jugendschutz.net's flyer "[Wer ist Ana?](#)" (PDF) i.e who is Ana? provides information on how to identify risky

have to offer help and support where they previously hosted content glorifying risky behavior. Here, the referral to jugendschutz.net's website anaundmia.de is a suitable choice.

In order to help social media platform operators with their assessment of self-harm content, jugendschutz.net also developed [practical guidelines \(pdf\)](#).

jugendschutz.net joined efforts with the Voluntary Self-Monitoring of Multimedia Service Providers (FSM e. V.) and the organization 'Freunde für's Leben' i.e. 'Friends for life' and founded the initiative [NEKE – Nur einen Klick entfernt](#) i.e. just a click away to develop strategies to combat self-harm behavior and build a network including all relevant actors.

Read more [The National Suicide Prevention Program](#)

pro-Ana/Mia content and tips for those suffering from an eating disorder and their parents on how to deal with this.

A list of counseling services for those affected and their families is available for download [here](#) (PDF).

Reporting on suicide and suicide forums should be less extensive and dramatic and more sensitive to avoid copycat behavior. In cooperation with the National Suicide Prevention Program, jugendschutz.net developed [media guidelines](#) for the reporting of suicide (PDF).