

BATTLE SCARS CIO FACEBOOK GROUP POLICY

Policy information	
Organisation	Battle Scars
Scope of policy	Applies to on-line services
Policy operational date (original)	29/12/18
Policy prepared by	Jenny Groves – CEO
Date approved by Board	15/01/24
Reviewed on Reviewed by	06/01/24 Jenny Groves - CEO
Amended	Yes
Policy review date	By 31/01/24 Every 2 years.
Distributing	This policy will be available on the Battle Scars website It will be a requirement for all trustees and staff to read the policy after appointment or after its review. A summary of all relevant policies will be included in the volunteer handbook with clear signposting to the full text. Volunteers will be kept up to date with any changes that might affect their role.
Introduction	
Purpose of Policy	Battle Scars is committed to safeguarding the members of the private on-line support group <i>Battle scars survivor led self-harm support group</i> https://www.facebook.com/groups/182423148780739/ and this policy lays out how to achieve this. [“private” means that nobody outside the group can see who the members are or the posts]
Those affected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the group • Admins and moderators • People applying to join the group
What is the difference between an admin and a moderator	Facebook group admins can make changes to the group that moderators cannot, such as changing the group’s description and other settings. For the purpose of monitoring, both admins and moderators have the same powers.
Procedure	
Key rules for the protection of group members	<p>We insist that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all contact is kept within the group; no personal messages or other contact outside of the group between the group members is allowed unless members already know and trust each other or have contact by attending the Battle Scars peer support groups or similar. • Members do not criticise other members. • Graphic photos, for example of recent injuries, are not posted in the group.

Private messaging admins/moderators	Members are encouraged to private message admins/moderators if they have concerns they would hesitate to post in the group. Also to report a post that they deem as inappropriate. This is the only private messaging that is allowed.
How will the key points of this policy be initially known to members	All those applying to join the group are asked to agree to the group rules and indicate how they found out about the group (for statistical purposes). If they have not within 24 hours of requesting to join the group, the request is rejected (but the member is not blocked and therefore able to reapply at a later time). Frequent reminders of the key rules and about reading the rules post (see below) are posted.
Approval of members	Anybody applying to join must follow instructions and agree to the rules. If they do, the member of the admin team who has seen it will check the person's profile page. If they have any concerns, they can discuss it with the other admins/moderators and a joint decision will be made. In case of serious concerns, the person's application will be rejected and they may also be blocked from re-applying.
Full rules for Facebook group members	<p>[Capital letters used instead of bold as this function is not available in this part of Facebook]</p> <p>Group rules MUST be followed. Breaking them will result in a warning (only one is given) or even instant removal from the group.</p> <p>"Welcome to Battle scars survivor led self-harm support group. Make sure that you take a look at our rules before posting and commenting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DO NOT POST GRAPHIC PHOTOS (e.g. of recent injuries) or descriptions. PLEASE CONSIDER THE OTHER MEMBERS. Posting of graphic photos will result in instant removal from the group. Photos of healed scars in comments only 2. Use content warnings such as "abuse", "sh", "suicide", "flashbacks", "wound advice needed", "alcohol", "parent's view", "family member needing support" etc. with post lower (see example in pinned post). A plain Trigger Warning is NOT ENOUGH. This applies to "counting" posts too and any non-graphic pics MUST be in the comments. NO colourful backgrounds allowed and text must be "normal" size 3. KEEP ALL CONTACT WITHIN THE GROUP. Do not personal message, speak via messenger or similar, or exchange phone numbers or offer to do any of the above with members unless you already know and trust them 4. We are here to support each other and help each other feel better. If you are asking for support make sure you engage 5. Sharing of events relevant to the group is allowed with admin's permission. If you wish to conduct RESEARCH please email Battle Scars info@battle-scars-self-harm.org.uk Posting of spam will result in immediate removal from the group

	<p>6. MEMBERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY AND ANY ACTION TAKEN.</p> <p>7. This group is NOT RUN by mental health professionals. We cannot physically help you.</p> <p>8. WE RECOMMEND YOU DO NOT ACCEPT FRIEND REQUESTS from group members unless you know and trust them.</p> <p>9. ADMINS CANNOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE POSTS OF MEMBERS OR FOR INCIDENTS HAPPENING OUTSIDE OF THE GROUP (in private messages etc.) Admins are not obliged to respond to posts</p> <p>10. ANY COMPLAINTS OR CONCERNS PLEASE CONTACT ADMIN so we can look into it. We are always keeping an eye on all posts to make sure they're appropriate. IMPORTANT: you must answer with the word BATTLE when responding to the question about the rules. All other answers will result in rejection”</p>
<p>Who enforces the rules</p>	<p>A team of at least 10 will monitor the group. 3 admins with the ability to change group settings are adequate to allow for cover, all others are moderators.</p> <p>Admins/moderators will be recruited from volunteers (and it will be added to their role description) and from existing group members. Existing members of the admin team can put forward group members they deem suitable who can be approached by private message and asked if they'd like to become a moderator. An ad may be posted in the group when more are required. We will check out all interaction within the group of anybody interested which must be at least similar to the Battle Scars ethos of acceptance and genuine support. If they have not interacted much, they will be asked to wait for a decision until we're happy they interact in this way.</p> <p>Every effort is made to comply with our Equality & Diversity policy by recruiting people of all ages and from different parts of the world. Good communication skills in English are required. New admins/moderators are added to the BS admin Messenger thread and the BS admin private group. Joint decisions are made through these and new members of the admin team can learn the process and thinking behind the decisions. New members of the team are not expected to make such decisions until they feel more confident and every member of the team is encouraged to seek the rest of the team's support. All admins/moderators also have the option to contact the Battle Scars CEO. No formal supervision is offered to the admins/moderators unless they are also registered volunteers but they have the option to become volunteers if they wish to. Long-serving moderators/admins do not need to provide references.</p> <p>If there are serious concerns about an admin's/moderator's activities after taking on the role the rest of the team may wish to discuss this and consider removal. A longer serving admin will discuss the issues with that particular admin/moderator and either give them a chance to improve or explain the reasons for removal.</p>

	Admins/moderators can step down at any time.
What the admin team look out for	<p>Offers to have private conversations outside of the group: “private message (pm) me” or “inbox me” or similar.</p> <p>Graphic photographs of injuries. Photographs of healed injuries (scars) are allowed as they can also be a way to discourage others to cause such damage to themselves. Such photos can only be added in the comments section instead of the main post.</p> <p>Judgemental comments.</p> <p>Suggestions of self-harm methods, step-by-step instructions or ways to increase the damage.</p> <p>Suggestions on ways to achieve suicide, i.e. how many tablets are required.</p> <p>Any encouragement to attempt suicide.</p> <p>Weight related posts with weight numbers, calorie numbers, descriptions of bingeing amounts, weight gain/loss or similar.</p>
How will the rules be enforced	<p>Admins/moderators monitor every post and comment within the group. If there are any concerns about a member’s post or comment or if any of the rules are broken, the admin/moderator can take action if confident, such as issuing a warning, hiding or deleting the post or removing and blocking the member.</p> <p>If the admin/moderator needs advice they can discuss it with the other admins/moderators in the Battle Scars admin Messenger thread. The decisions made by the team, apart from the above, may include monitoring the member’s future activity or private messaging to find out if there are any issues that should be discussed out of the group. The risk to the other members of the group must be assessed. This is a task for the more experienced admins/moderators and even though it may be safer for more than one member of the admin team to together contact the group member, this could also be very intimidating. Since more can join the conversation at any point, that remains an option.</p> <p>Members will be put on “post approval” if the moderators have any concerns, giving them the opportunity to intercept any inappropriate posts. Post approval is only valid for 30 days but can be extended indefinitely.</p>
Warnings	<p>One warning only is issued if the “no private messaging”, “no graphic pictures allowed” or “no ads” rules are broken. If the member breaks any rules again, they are removed and blocked. In certain cases where the breach is severe (for example, if very graphic photographs of new injuries have been posted without even a trigger warning), warning from the admins/moderators does not need to be issued and the member can be instantly removed and blocked. This especially applies to members joining after 06/10/18 when they have had to confirm to abide by the rules upon requesting to join.</p> <p>If a member is given a warning the admin/moderator who issued it must post in the BS Admin group with the name of the member and the reason the warning was issued. Thanks to the search facility in groups it’s quick to check if a member has already been issued with a warning and if removal and blocking is required.</p>

<p>Dealing with safety concerns</p>	<p>Members in the <i>Battle scars survivor led self-harm support group</i> can be from anywhere in the world. Unless specified on their public profile, we do not know where they are from or how old they are.</p> <p>When a member posts or comments and we become aware that they are in danger of seriously hurting themselves or of killing themselves we will try to engage them in conversation and offer whatever support we can within the group (it may include finding and providing helpline numbers in their area).</p> <p>In some cases, we will try to find out if this person is an adult or a child (under 18) and where they live (city, country). If they live in the UK one of the experienced admins/moderators may private message them to try to obtain more information. When urgent intervention is needed the admin/moderator will try to get the member's location, exact age and full name (as it may differ from the name they're using in Facebook) so that the emergency services can be contacted.</p> <p>Since this kind of intervention requires the member's cooperation being able to act the way we need to act is difficult and most often, impossible.</p> <p>The admin team will pursue the matter as far as possible but hold no responsibility for the member's actions. The admin team will support each other through this and it may require more than one admin/moderator to engage in a joint thread with the member.</p> <p>In many cases, the most the admin team can offer is signposting and encouragement to get professional help. Members are reminded that we are not a crisis service.</p> <p><i>See Protecting Vulnerable Adults and Safeguarding Children policies</i></p>
<p>Reporting posts</p>	<p>If members are not happy about a post or comment, have been triggered by it or are concerned for the posting member's or other member's safety they are encouraged to report to admin. In some cases, urgent action is required (such as removal of graphic content that hadn't yet been seen by the admin team) and the admin/moderator can act by hiding or deleting (as well as removing and blocking the member who put the post/comment up), or they may wish to consult with the rest of the admin team.</p> <p>If no action is taken because the post/comment is deemed acceptable, a comment may be added-explaining why we allowed the post/comment to remain without drawing attention to the person who reported it.</p>
<p>Other</p>	<p>The admin team are under no obligation to respond to any post but acknowledging posts by "liking" (or similar) if there has been no other activity is good practice. Then no member feels ignored.</p> <p>Any monetary exchange is discouraged whether between members or between admins/moderators and members. The admin team hold no responsibility if members decide to, for example, loan each other money.</p> <p>Any ads will be removed as soon as spotted.</p>

	<p>If a member posts about events linked to self-harm and mental health or share links to articles or similar they could be allowed once the admin team have checked them and have been deemed to match the Battle Scars ethos and to be helpful. Links to other groups or are only allowed with the admin team's permission.</p> <p>Battle Scars and the Facebook admin team hold no responsibility for members sharing information outside of the group as there is no way to monitor this.</p> <p>Any researcher who wishes to post about their research in the group must contact Battle Scars by email and provide proof of ethical approval and a poster suitable for social media. Final decision rests with the CEO.</p>
Revising group rules	Group rules are periodically revised in order to make them as clear as possible or to add new ones if certain incidents have warranted such action. This policy will be updated as well.
Policy review	
Responsibility	It is the responsibility of the CEO to review this policy unless the task has been delegated to an appropriate volunteer or employee before the policy review date.
Procedure	All volunteers and employees can have input in this policy's review via their supervision.
Timing	The review must be completed within a month of the review date.