



FEMALE
LOUD - PROUD - FEMINISTS

DIGITAL SAFETY AND SECURITY MANUAL FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN LEBANON



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“I AM PUTTING MY OWN WELL-BEING AT THE CORE OF EVERY MOVE I TAKE ON THE INTERNET. I AM CAPACITATED TO RE-APPROPRIATE THE INTERNET AND EXPRESS MY TRUEST SELF. I AM ENJOYING TIME SPENT ONLINE AND MAKING THE MOST OF IT SAFELY AND BOLDLY”.





THE SILENT CRIME: ONLINE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

Online gender-based violence (OGBV) is any act that is committed, assisted, aggravated or amplified by the use of information communication technologies (ICTs) or other digital tools which results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological, social, political or economic harm or other infringements of rights and freedoms. These are forms of violence that are directed against women because they are women and that affect women and adolescent girls disproportionately. Young women and girls, who are more likely to use tech for learning, accessing information and connecting with peers, also face heightened exposure to online violence. One global study found that 58 percent of girls and young women have experienced some form of online harassment.

OGBV occurs within a continuum of multiple types of violence against women and girls which are often connected to violence in the offline world. It encompasses many forms, including intimate image abuse, doxing (the sharing of personal or identifying details), trolling (posting messages, images or videos and the creation of hashtags for the purpose of provoking or inciting violence against women and girls).

OGBV also includes misogynistic or gendered hate speech as well as efforts to silence and discredit women online, and can escalate to threats of physical violence.



DIGITAL SAFETY RITUAL: WEEDING OUT PARASITES

**WHAT
CONSTITUTES
ONLINE
GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE?**

Infringement of privacy:

- Cracking personal accounts, stealing passwords, using/stealing identities, using another person's computer to access your accounts without consent
- Taking, accessing, using, manipulating, and/or disseminating photographs and/or videos without consent
- Sharing and/or disseminating private information and/or content, including sexualised images without knowledge or consent
- Contacting and/or harassing your family, friends or classmates (etc.) to gain access to you

Surveillance and monitoring:

- Monitoring, tracking and/or surveillance of online and offline activities
 - Tracking and/or stalking your movements without consent
- Damaging reputation and/or credibility:
- Manipulating and/or creating fake photographs and/or videos
 - Identity theft (e.g. pretending to be the person who created an image and posting or sharing it publicly)
 - Disseminating private (and/or culturally sensitive/controversial) information for the purpose of damaging your reputation

Harassment (which may be accompanied by offline harassment):

- Cyberbullying and/or repeated harassment through unwanted messages, attention and/or contact
- Face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying can often happen alongside each other. But cyberbullying leaves a digital footprint – a record that can prove useful and provide evidence to help stop the abuse
- Direct threats of violence, including threats of sexual and/or physical violence (e.g. threats of rape)
- Unsolicited sending and/or receiving of sexually explicit materials
- Incitement to physical violence
- Use of sexist and/or gendered comments or name-calling (e.g. use of terms like "bitch"/"slut")
- Abusing and/or shaming a woman for expressing views that are not normative, for disagreeing with people (often men) and also for refusing sexual advances

STANDING MY GROUND AGAINST ONLINE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE:

- Breathe in and out. Do not despair, you got this!
- Do not blame yourself, online violence is a global issue
- Do not respond to the requests of the blackmailer/perpetrator no matter the pressure
- Do not go through this alone: rely on your community and closed circle for advice and support
- Save the evidence of what happened whenever possible: videos, screenshots, names, emails, audios etc.
- Leverage the “reporting” feature on social media platforms and ask your network of relatives and friends to massively report the abusive account and/or the content
- Get in touch with local movements for direct guidance including FEMALE’s hotline as well as feminist organisations and collectives working on the issue
- Disconnect temporarily. Indulge in self-love and come back stronger





TAKING LEGAL STEPS AGAINST ONLINE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE:

- I report to the Internal Security Forces or the Public Prosecution Office about attempts of blackmailing or instances of cyberbullying that I am exposed to when they occur without hinting to the blackmailer that I want to inform the competent authorities, the hotline number for the Balegh service 01293293
- I can go directly to the Cyber Crimes Bureau located in the Furn El Chebbak area to open an immediate report on the incident and take a quick preventive measure
- I can file a complaint with the Public Prosecution Office of Appeal in the areas where the crime occurred against a person identified by his name if he is known or against an unknown person if I do not know the identity of the aggressor, to be referred to the Cyber Crimes Bureau.
- The Public Prosecution Offices of Appeal are located in the judicial offices and are distributed in the regions as follows:
 - ➔ Bekaa (public prosecution in Zahle)
 - ➔ Nabatieh
 - ➔ Beirut
 - ➔ Mount Lebanon (public prosecution in Baabda)
 - ➔ South Lebanon (public prosecutor in Sidon)
 - ➔ Northern Lebanon (public prosecution in Tripoli)



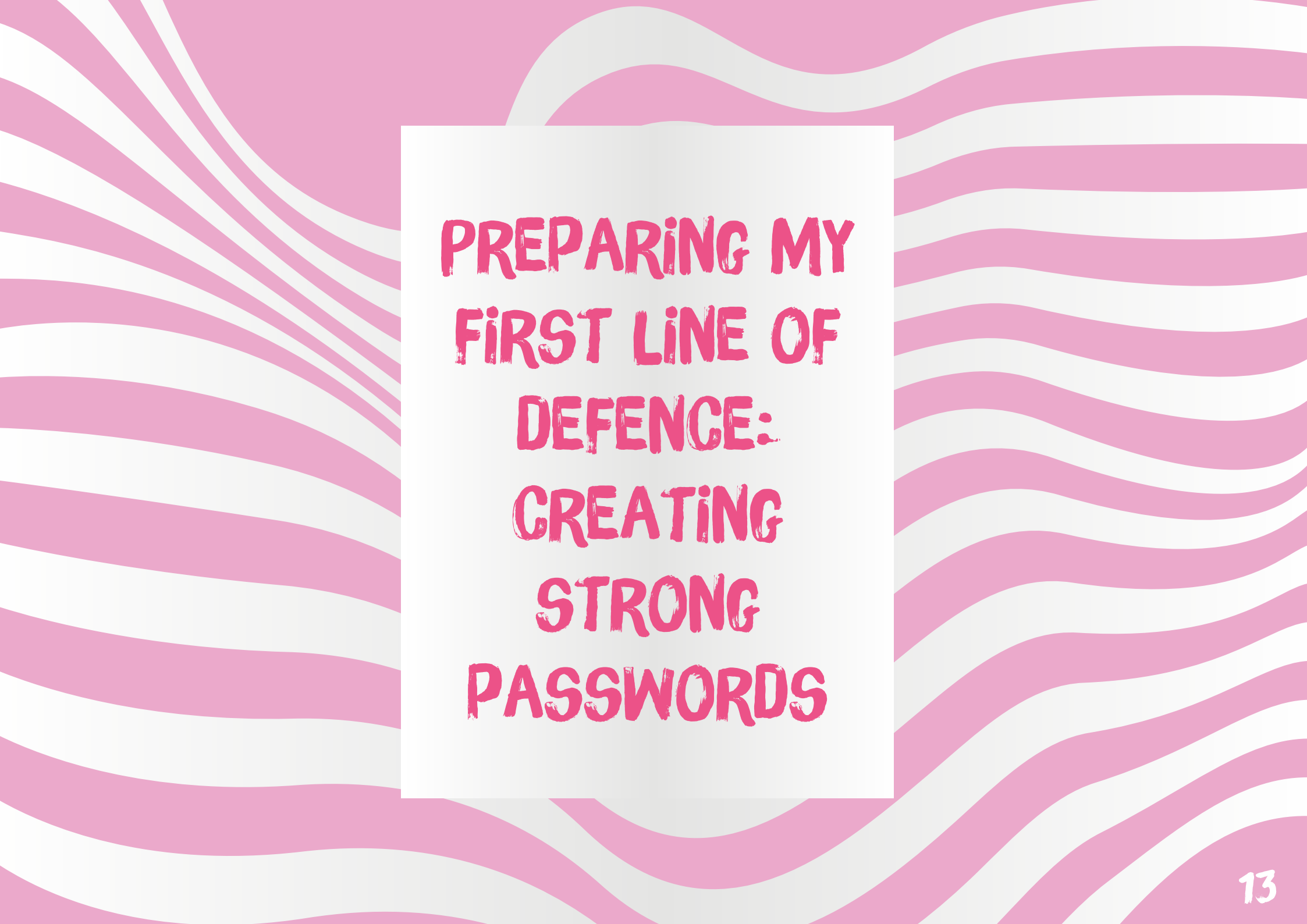
CALLING BACK MY INNER POWER: ASSESSING THREATS AND RISKS

- There is no single or ultimate solution to keeping you safe on the Internet.
- Digital security isn't about what tools to use.
- It is about understanding the threats you face and how those threats can be countered within your environment.

TO BE SAFER, YOU MUST DETERMINE WHAT YOU NEED TO PROTECT AND FROM WHOM:

- ① What happens if someone accesses my phone?
- ① What kind of information is on my device? What could happen to me?
- ① What could happen to my family members, friends and colleagues?
- ① How do I know if someone is stalking me online to undermine my presence?

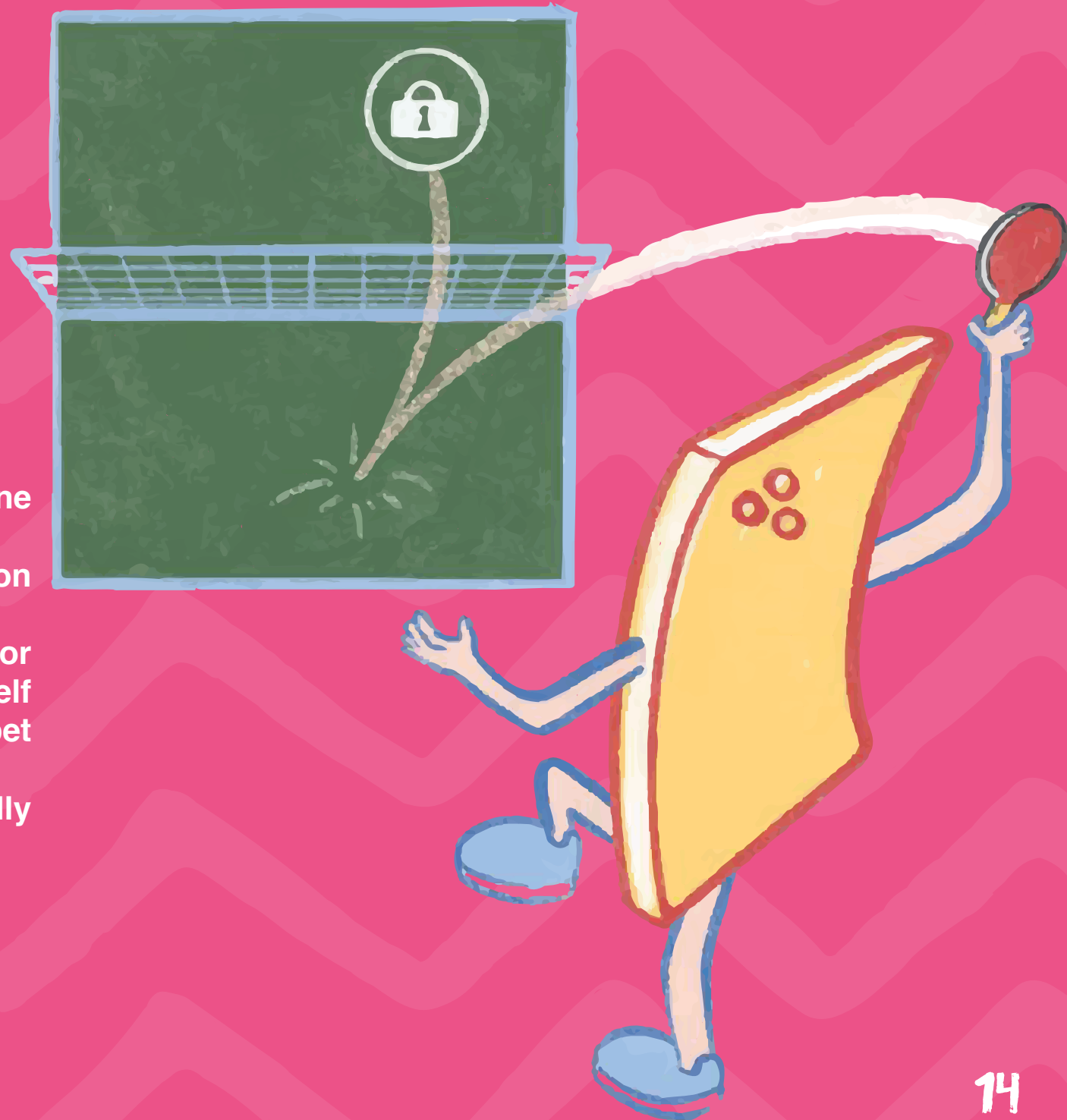


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**PREPARING MY
FIRST LINE OF
DEFENCE:
CREATING
STRONG
PASSWORDS**

A STRONG PASSWORD IS RANDOM, LONG, COMPLEX AND SECRET:

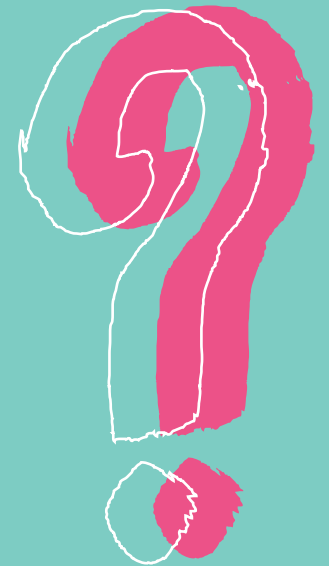
- It has not been shared with anyone
- It is easy to memorise
- It is unique for each application and accounts
- It does not include any personal or predictable information about myself (my last name, home address, my pet name etc.)
- It is periodically changed (ideally every 3-6 months)



KEEPING MY VIRTUAL CASTLE NEAT AND TIDY: COMPARTMENTALISING

Compartmentalising my social networks:

**ARE ALL MY ACCOUNTS FOR THE SAME USE?
ARE THEY FOR PERSONAL USE?
OR FOR ACTIVISM OR EDUCATIONAL USE?**



Be clear about your needs to set up your cybersecurity strategy and divide the information accordingly.

That being said, make sure that your first line of defence is different either way, a.k.a passwords.

Personal use

- My account is private.
- I am aware that the content I share is exposing my private life and daily routine.
- My contacts are people I know and ideally have met in person.
- My posts are private.
- My privacy settings are regularly checked.
- I can use “closed friends” feature for enhanced privacy

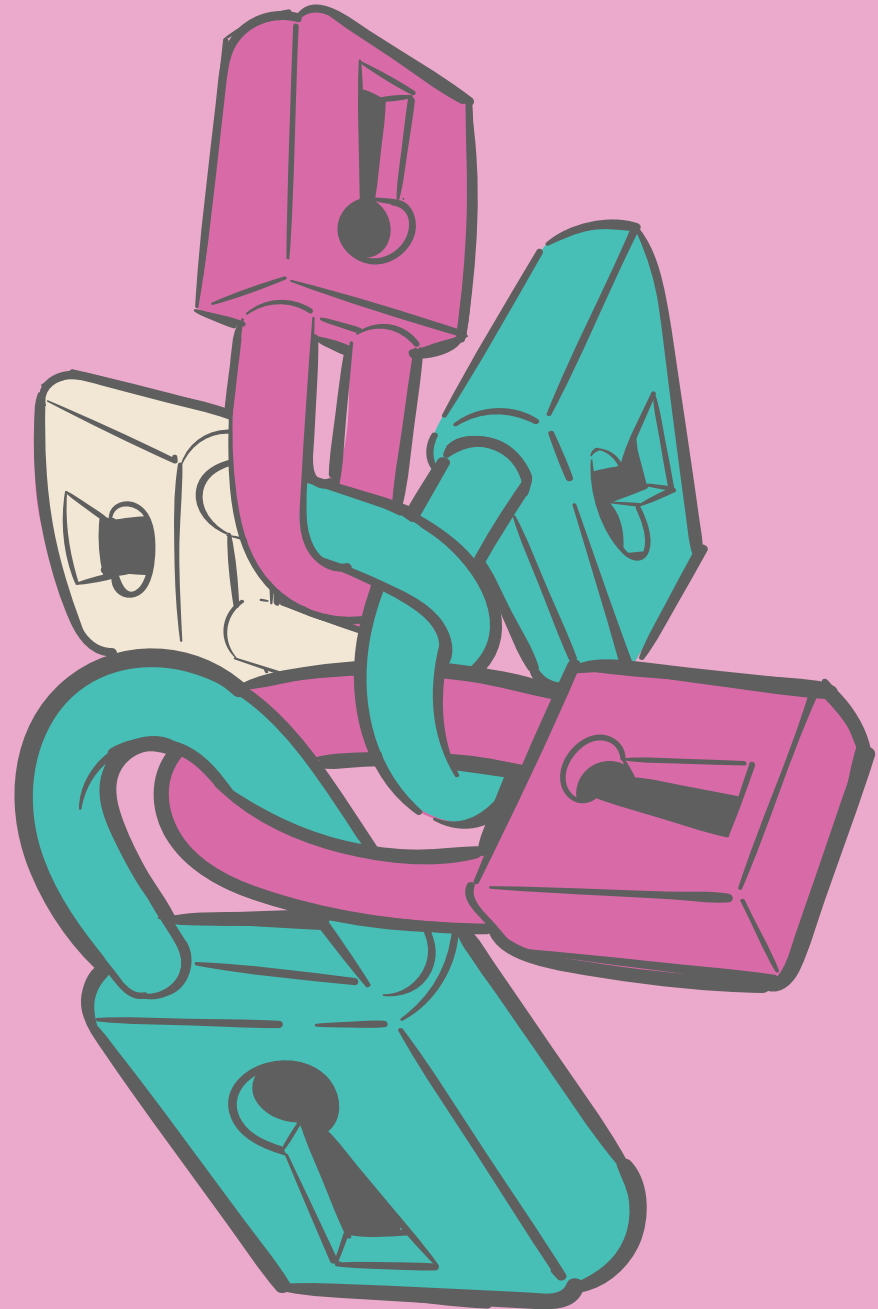
Activism or other use

- I decide whether to use a real name or just a pseudonym.
- I am aware that my account is public for broader outreach.
- I only share content that aligns with the strategy of the account.
- I avoid sharing content that provides sensitive information such as real-time location, neighbourhood, personal relationships etc.
- I consistently filter out followers that act or seem shady.
- I can use “closed friends” feature for enhanced privacy.

**NURTURING MY DIGITAL
SELVES: “MY BODY, MY
DEVICES, MY EXPRESSION”**

STEPPING UP MY GAME: SAFE BROWSING CHECK-LIST

- Only use secure internet browsing. You can identify safe websites with the closed padlock icon
- Get a password manager to organise and keep track of your passwords
- Stick a strip of duct tape over your webcam to hide the camera or purchase a camera cover
- Download end-to-end encrypted messaging apps for personal and sensitive information sharing such as WhatsApp and Signal
- Back-up your information and intimate images on a external hard drive
- Use Incognito mode for private browsing with tracking protection
- Sign up for a Virtual Private Network (VPN) for enhanced privacy
- Regularly declutter your devices, i.e deleting any unnecessary/expired file, image, video etc.



**LEARNING ABOUT THE PRIVACY
SETTINGS OF MY FAVOURITE
SOCIAL MEDIA APPS:**

➤ I can decide who can see my profile, send me direct messages or comment on my posts by adjusting my account privacy settings

➤ I can report hurtful comments, messages, photos and videos and request they be removed

➤ Besides “unfriending” or “unfollowing”, I can completely block people to stop them from seeing my profile or contacting me

➤ I can also choose to have comments by certain people to appear only to them without completely blocking them

➤ I can delete posts on my profile or archive them until further notice

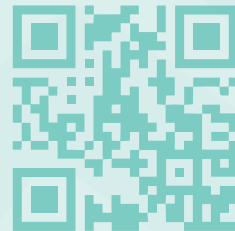
➤ I can restrict, report, and block people without them getting notified



ABOUT FEMALE

FEMALE is a community based grassroots feminist organization that works towards a just and safe world for women and girls in all their diversities through driving social-behavioral changes, movement building, knowledge production and dissemination, and policy reform.

We are steered and managed by visionary women and allies from the feminist community, and work with a large cadre of dedicated volunteers across Lebanon.



@femalecomms