



SAFE AND STRONG

An LGBTQIA+ guide
to Facebook and Instagram





THE QUEER MUSLIM PROJECT

With most countries opting for partial or complete lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, many LGBTQIA+ youth now risk being in isolation within hostile environments with unsupportive family members or co-habitants, leading to a rise in mental health concerns, such as anxiety, emotional stress, and depression. In times like these, many from the LGBTQIA+ community have turned to the internet, social media, and new media for relevant information, safe spaces, and opportunities for creative self-expression and community building.

Instagram has amplified LGBTQIA+ voices around the world by empowering queer content creators and organizations, and by creating opportunities for self-representation and leadership for underserved communities. As South Asia's largest virtual network of LGBTQIA+ Muslims and allies, The Queer Muslim Project has used visual art and storytelling to promote sex-positive, affirming and intersectional representations of our communities.

However, social media has its downsides too. While there is sufficient content that is meaningful and affirming, there is also online harassment and bullying, specifically targeted at women, transgender and queer individuals, which significantly affect our health and wellbeing. We address negativity on our feed by limiting comments to our followers and monitoring the quality of conversations on our posts. Offline, we also work to equip LGBTQIA+ Muslim individuals with the skills necessary to challenge existing narratives of fear and stigma through inclusive faith-based dialogue, identifying adequate legal and mental health support, and creating safe and enabling spaces.

With Pride Marches being canceled or postponed and organizers around the world pivoting to virtual mediums to celebrate Pride Month, The Queer Muslim Project has developed this resource in partnership with Instagram to support your wellbeing, to help you stay safe, and practise self care online. We sincerely hope you will find it useful.

We hope to see you soon, online!

Rafiul Alom Rahman
The Queer Muslim Project
[@thequeermuslimproject](https://www.instagram.com/thequeermuslimproject)

KEEPING SOCIAL MEDIA A POSITIVE & SAFE PLACE

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PROTECT YOUR SPACE

By switching to a **private account** on Instagram, you can **choose who follows you and views** the photos and videos you share. It's also quick and easy to **check how the privacy** of your Facebook account, and **control who sees your posts**.

HOW TO ☺



From your profile page, access your **Settings** menu. Scroll down to **Private Account** and move the slider to the right. The slider will turn blue once the account is private.



Privacy Checkup guides you through some of your privacy and security settings, so you can review your choices to help make sure that you're sharing with who you want. To access this feature, click the **?** icon on the top-right of your Facebook page, and select **Privacy Checkup**.



Veer Misra

 @V.EIRD

“Instagram has helped me find my voice as both a queer person and artist. It’s equipped me with tools to actualise my larger goal of providing representation and safe digital spaces for queer kids. To make this a reality, I don’t hesitate to block or restrict certain people. If I see no place or potential for intervention or a conversation about differing views on my page, I have no guilt in reporting a profile for hate speech. You need to resort to measures that limit the reach of your account, but maintain safety. That’s nothing to feel guilty about.”



BE PICKY ABOUT SHARING

If you're excited to share something, but **only want a select group of friends or followers to see**, share it through **Direct** or **Close Friends** on Instagram, or use the controls on Facebook to **choose who sees your post**.

HOW TO ✓



Instead of the main upload tool, click on the **Instagram Direct** icon in the top right corner and choose who to share it with (up to 15 people). With Stories, you can select individual followers or groups to share with, and you can identify a group of **Close Friends** to share any Story with instead of posting publicly.



You can use the **Audience Selector** tool most places you share status updates, photos and other things you post. Click the drop-down menu above the Post button and select who you want to share something with.

Options for Audiences include:

- Public
- Friends
- Friends Except (*to ensure specific people do not view your post*)
- Specific Friends (*to choose a smaller group of people to view your post*)
- Only Me



MUTE THE NOISE

It's okay if you need a break from someone you follow, on Instagram you can use **Mute** to hide another account's posts. They won't be notified you've muted them, and you can simply unmute them when you want to see what they're up to again.

On Facebook, you can **Snooze** a person, group or page to see less of them in your Newsfeed. Snoozing a person, Page or group prevents you from seeing their posts in your News Feed for 30 days.

HOW TO ✓



To **Mute** someone, tap the **⋮** menu in the corner of that person's post. You can choose whether to mute feed posts, story posts, or both. You can also mute them by pressing and holding on a story in your tray or from a profile.



To **Snooze** someone, click to **⋮** on the top-right of one of their posts, and select snooze. The person, Page or group you've snoozed won't know that they've been snoozed.



You can also take a break from social media, or **manage how you spend your time online**, with the time management tools on Instagram and Facebook.

HOW TO ☺



In your **Settings** menu, click on **Your Activity**. You can then view how much time you're spending on Instagram, set daily reminders to limit the time you spend online, and mute notifications when you don't want to be bothered.



On the Facebook App, go into your **Settings & Privacy** menu and then select **Your Time on Facebook**. You can then view how much time you're spending on Facebook, set daily reminders to limit the time you spend online, and mute notifications when you don't want to be bothered.

Mute Push Notifications

Silence Instagram notifications for a period of time. When your preset time is up, notifications will return to their normal settings without having to reset them.

HOW TO ☺



Tap on **Notifications** on the settings menu and turn on 'pause all'. Select the time duration for which you wish to mute notifications.

Hide Like Counts

You can choose to hide like counts on the posts you see while scrolling through Instagram, or on the posts you

HOW TO ☺

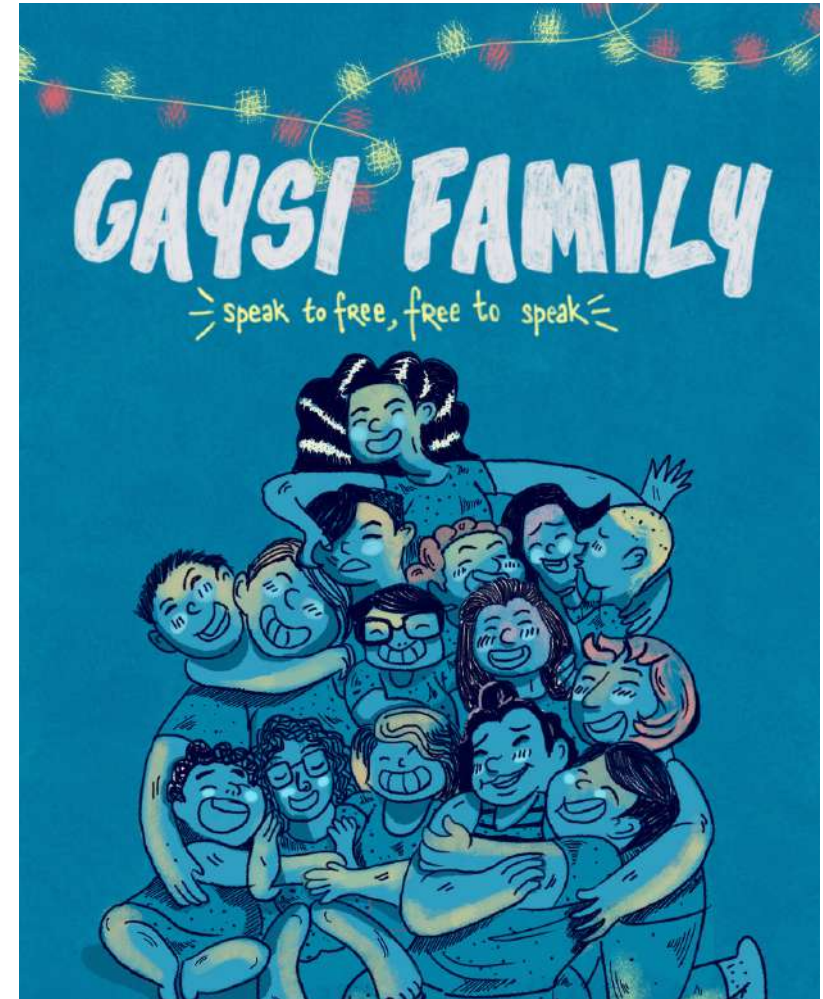


Tap on 'privacy' in the 'settings' menu. Tap on the 'posts' and turn off **hide like and view counts**

Gaysi Family

 @GAYSIFAMILY

“Instagram has given us a way to amplify our stories and our artistic endeavours as a collective South Asian LGBTQ community that is spread across the world. We are all constantly growing, and Instagram has broken the boundaries for the rest of our family to connect with us through our inbox and our comment sections. We’ve made friends, been called out when we were wrong, and found a vibrant community of supporters and allies. That gives us the courage and strength to do what we do.”



OWNING YOUR FEED

If someone you follow makes you feel bad about yourself, it may be time to [Unfollow](#) or [Unfriend](#) them. No notification is sent when you Unfollow or Unfriend someone. Think of it as a small but powerful way to practice self-care. On Facebook, you can also [select the kinds of posts you want to see on your Newsfeed](#).

HOW TO



Go to the profile of the person you'd like to unfollow and tap [Unfollow](#).



Click the downward arrow at the top-right of any Facebook page. Select [News Feed Preferences](#) from this menu. You can then prioritize whose posts you see first and make posts from people or Pages appear at the top of your News Feed. You can also [Unfollow](#) a person, page or group, and manage your snooze settings.



Under25

 @UNDER25OFFICIAL

“The youth of this country have lots to say about who they are, how they identify and how their identities belong in this world. The freedom to express online has led to an organic culture shift and given power to netizens who drive forward the narrative of being proud and owning their identities. We’ve seen and felt a strong wave of empowerment among youth who identify beyond stereotypes. Instagram has played a key role in this process for us a community, by not just empowering queer students, but also creating a safe space for discussions, belonging and expression regardless of how you identify. From simplifying what it means to be queer to our audiences, covering news about transgender progress in India and spotlighting LGBTQIA voices to explain these concepts better, we’ve worked to increase the inclusivity within our social platforms.”



BLOCK NEGATIVITY

If someone is **negatively impacting your experience**, you can **Block** them. When you Block someone, they're never notified and they can no longer view your posts or search for your account. (And you can unblock them at any time.)

HOW TO ✓



Tap **⋮** on their profile, then tap **Block**.



Click the downward arrow at the top-right of any Facebook page. Select **Blocking** and in the **Block Users** section, enter the name of the person you want to block and click **Block**.

You can also go to the person's profile and select **Block** from the **⋮** menu in the bottom right of their cover photo



BLOCK NEGATIVITY

If you're not comfortable blocking someone on Instagram, you can now **Restrict** them — which **protects your account from unwanted interactions** without making the targeted person aware. Once you Restrict someone, comments from that person will only be visible to that person. Restricted people aren't able to see when you're active on Instagram or when you've read their direct messages.

HOW TO ✓



You can **Restrict** someone by tapping **⋮** on their profile, and then tapping **Restrict**.

BLOCK NEGATIVITY

Sensitive Content control allows you to choose how much or how little sensitive content to see from accounts you don't follow. You can control the amount of sensitive content and accounts you see in Explore, Search, Reels, Accounts You Might Follow, Hashtag Pages, and In-Feed Recommendations.

The Sensitive Content Control has three options, “More”, “Standard” and “Less”.

HOW TO ✓



Tap account in the Settings menu. Click on Sensitive Content Control and select between the three settings.

Solidarity Foundation

 @SOLIDARITYFOUNDATION

“Instagram helps us bring to the world grassroots narratives that rarely feature in mainstream media. The visual, easily readable format of Instagram Stories has not just served as an effective way of raising community issues, but has also allowed for solidarity and partnerships to be built among like-minded organisations and individuals working on such issues across geographies. The Instagram Live feature has been beneficial as well — we’ve attended live sessions by activists and organisations working on LGBTIAQ+ rights, offering us a window to a diverse range of work and to build new partnerships and connections.”

Free counselling by experts —



**MENTAL
HEALTH CARE
FOR LGBTQIA+
PERSONS**

CALL US NOW
Helpline number
- 9013262626

**Counselling in English,
Hindi, Kannada, Tamil and
Telugu.**

Arise
Touching lives

BE YOURSELF

Because Facebook and Instagram are used for different purposes, we take different approaches to names.

On Instagram, you can choose whatever name you like, and use multiple accounts to express yourself freely.

Because Facebook is used to connect with family and friends, we ask that people to use the name that they are known by in the community. This helps keep the Facebook community safe from impersonation, scams and phishing.

But we know it's important to make sure Facebook's authentic name policy works for everyone, and that you are affirmed for who you are and the name you use in everyday life. That's why you can now provide additional context on why you are using a particular name, and we have changed the ID verification experience to be simpler, more compassionate, and to broaden the types of ID that can be used.

HOW TO



If you're asked to verify your name, you can select [I have a special circumstance](#) to provide more information about why you are using that name.

CONTROL THE COMMENTS

Instagram and Facebook have comment controls which allow you to **choose who comments on your posts**.

HOW TO ✓



Select **Comment Controls** in the **Settings** menu — there you can choose to allow comments from: 1) everyone, 2) people you follow and those people’s followers, 3) just the people you follow, or 4) your followers. You can also turn off comments entirely from your posts.



To change who can comment on your public posts, click the downward arrow at the top-right of any Facebook page and select **Settings**. Click **Public Posts** on the left. Go to **Who Can Follow Me** and make sure **Public** is selected. Click **Edit** next to **Public Post Comments**, then select who is allowed to like or comment on your public posts.



CONTROL THE COMMENTS

You can also enter which **words, phrases, and emojis you find offensive**, and any comments containing them will be automatically hidden from you (but the person posting won't be notified).

HOW TO ✓



To manually add specific words and phrases you find offensive to be filtered out from your comments, save them in the **Manual Filter** option. The **Offensive Comment** filter is switched on by default.



We also make a **Profanity Filter** available for Facebook Pages, where a select number of words and phrases can be added. This filters out comments on the Page that use these words.

CONTROL THE COMMENTS

You can **limit** unwanted interactions for a period of time by automatically hiding comments and message requests from people who don't follow you, or who only recently followed you.

Accounts that you chose to limit can still comment on your posts, but their comments will be hidden unless you approve them. You can limit people for up to four weeks at a time.

HOW TO ✓



Tap on the three lines in the top right, then tap Settings. Tap Privacy, then tap Limits. Tap Continue at the bottom. Accounts that aren't following you and Recent followers are automatically on. Set the time duration you would like to limit comments and messages.

LOOK OUT FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Homophobia and transphobia are unacceptable, and we encourage you to [report problematic content or comments](#) whenever you see them on our platforms so we can remove them.

HOW TO ☺



Tap [⋮](#) above the post, tap [Report](#), and select [It's Inappropriate](#) > [Hate speech or symbols](#).



Tap [⋮](#) at the top of the post, select [Find Support or Report Post](#) and select the [Hate speech](#) reason for reporting.



If you see a post that makes you worry that someone might hurt themselves, know that you don't have to handle it alone. Let Instagram or Facebook know about the post and the next time the person opens the app they will see a message connecting them to support resources, such as contacting a helpline, talking to friends, or finding additional resources.

It is completely anonymous. They will never know who reported their post. You are not telling on someone; you are helping them access support and resources.

HOW TO ✓



Tap ... above the post, tap Report, and select It's Inappropriate > Self injury.



Tap ... at the top of the post, select Find Support or Report Post and select the reason for reporting (ie. Suicide or Self-Injury).

Sandy Saha



@SANDYSAHAOFFICIAL

“Instagram gives me an optimistic podium to express myself. I have never been afraid of staying true to myself and this is something I want to inspire in others from the LGBTQIA community. Despite regular cusses and slurs, I continue making videos to remind my fellow LGBTQIA members to stand strong, to surpass all the negativity that crosses your paths, to make sure to never change yourselves an ounce because someone stares at you weirdly or jeers at you. Rather, let’s make the haters wear beautiful rainbow goggles!”



FINDING YOUR COMMUNITY

Find the people and groups that connect you to life-affirming content and communities of support.

HOW TO ✓



Some commonly used hashtags for inspiration include:


#LGBTIndia
#TransIsBeautiful
#LoveIsLove
#QueerIndia
#Pride
#QueerMuslimsUnplugged
#DalitQueer
#QueerDisabled



Click **Groups** on your Facebook menu to discover some of the popular groups near you, along with suggested groups you may like, and categories to search for groups.



MANAGING A FACEBOOK GROUP

 If you're an admin or a moderator of a group, there are some [key tips and tricks](#) to ensuring the safety and well-being of your members and their conversations.

There are two privacy options for Facebook groups: public and private. If the group is Public, anyone can see who's in the group and what they post. If the group is Private, only members can see who's in the group and what they post.


Only group admins can change the privacy of a Facebook group. All members of your group will receive a notification if you change the privacy settings. If your group has over 5000 members, you can not change it from private to public.

Group admins can also choose to make their group visible or hidden. Visible allows anyone to find the group in search and other places on Facebook. Hidden means that only members can find the group in search and other places on Facebook.

If you're a group admin, you can choose to turn on membership approval for your group. This means admins or moderators will have to approve membership requests before someone can join the group.

Only group admins can remove or block a member from a group. To do this, select your group and click Members in the left menu. Find the member you want to remove and select Remove from Group and/or Block Permanently. Click to check the box if you'd also like to delete posts, comments and pending member invites from the person you'd like to remove or block.

As an admin of a group, you can approve posts before they appear in your group. In Edit Group Settings and click to check the box next to Post Approval, then click Save at the bottom. You'll get notified when there's pending posts for you to approve (or delete).

If any member of the group reports a post, you'll get a notification. This feature lets group members highlight posts for you to review for any reason (example: inappropriate or offensive posts). You can then choose to delete the post, block the member who created the post, or ignore it by removing it from the report queue. To report the post to Facebook, find the post in your group's discussion, click  and then select Report post. Keep in mind that reports are anonymous.

You can temporarily stop someone from posting or commenting in the group. Click on the Members option in your Group, find the person you want to mute and select Mute Member. You can select the amount of time you want to prevent the person from posting or commenting in the group. You can also mute someone from a post or comment they made in the group within that post or comment options. When you mute a group member, the next time they visit the group they'll see that their ability to post or comment in the group has been temporarily turned off.

Select the Group Quality option on the left menu of your group, to see actions Facebook has taken to enforce Community Standards in your group. You can view content that was removed from your group for violating Community Standards, potentially violating content and false news in the group. As an admin, you can take action by clicking See Details next to a Community Standards violation to see the violation history of the member who posted that content. You can then click Take Action to turn on post approval, mute, remove or block the group member.

Group Insights provide metrics about your group, including member activity and engagement within the group. You can use Group Insights to understand how members engage within your group, see who the most active group members are, learn which posts have the most engagement, and more. To access simply click Group Insights on the left menu of your group.

For further information and many more tips on managing groups, visit our Help Center at facebook.com/help

Ya_All

 @ya.all.northeast

“For a region like India’s North East, which is geographically difficult with many diverse communities spread sparsely, the internet has become a great tool for young and queer people to connect, explore and grow. For a youth-queer led and focused network like ours, Instagram has worked wonders. We are able to reach out to many individuals in our region as well as outside, which we couldn’t have done physically. We have created a virtual safe space where we provide information on health, education, skills and livelihoods, thereby acting as a local resource hub in Manipur.”



RESOURCES

HELPLINES AND COUNSELLING

1. Helpline List

Pan-India helplines for LGBTQIA+ persons to reach India

<https://lgbtqindiaresource.wordpress.com/helpline/>

2. TISS i-Call

LGBTQIA+ affirmative telephone and email based counselling service India

Counselling helpline: +919152987821 | Special COVID helpline: +919152987820 (10am-6pm)

Email: icall@tiss.edu

3. Sappho Helpline

Mental and emotional support for lesbian, bisexual women and female-to-male transgender persons

India

+919831518320

4. Orinam

Resources for LGBTQIA+ individuals in crisis

India

<http://orinam.net/resources-for/lgbt/crisis-support/>

5. Sanjivini Society For Mental Health

Volunteer run, LGBTQIA+ friendly mental health support

Delhi NCR

<http://sanjivinisociety.org/>

RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

1. Ya-All

Support group for LGBTQIA+ youth in Manipur
Imphal

<http://www.yaall.org/>

2. Nazariya Queer Feminist Resource Group (QFRG)

Support group for lesbian, bisexual women and transgender (LBT) persons
Delhi

https://nazariyaqfrg.wordpress.com/?fbclid=IwARONCOQZ5BThqMIbWLCf_Kp7qBKGvtB9FvrReQ7x-qjng2uGQJXqnbhNuyk

3. Solidarity Foundation

Organization supporting low income LGBTQIA+ communities and sex workers
Bengaluru

<http://www.solidarityfoundation.in/page/about-us>

4. Pride Circle

Diversity and inclusion consulting firm with a mission of social equity by affirmative action for LGBTQIA+ community in India

Bengaluru

<https://thepridecircle.com/>

PRO BONO LEGAL AID AND INFORMATION

1. Human Rights Law Network (HRLN)

India

<https://hrln.org/who-we-are/>

+91-11-24374501

2. Lawyers Collective

Delhi

<https://www.lawyerscollective.org/contact>

3. Multiple Action Research Group (MARG)

India

<http://ngo-marg.org/>



@thequeermuslimproject

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