Feel At Home

Feel At Home is a social networking website which aims to provide a community to the people who are suffering from violent relationships. It is an initiative to make them **‘Feel At Home’**.

On average, a woman will leave an abusive relationship seven times before she leaves for good, according to [The National Domestic Violence Hotline](http://www.thehotline.org/2013/06/50-obstacles-to-leaving-1-10/). Our aim is to reduce that number and help these women realize that they are not alone. A plethora of NGOs and helplines exist to help domestic abuse victims but these women are in a vulnerable state of mind and don’t want to seek help or can’t, many of them are confused and scared thinking *‘maybe it really was my fault’.*

We don’t want to help domestic abuse victims; we want to enable them to help themselves. This can only be achieved by a gradual change of mind set which survivors and volunteers will bring. On this platform like-minded individuals will share their burden and truly empathise with their situation.

The impact this will create will be two-fold:

Firstly, these women will have an emotional support system during their darkest nights. This will reduce suicidal thoughts they may be having and will no longer feel like they are alone in their battle. They will have a family to shoulder to cry out in bad days and celebrate every victory with them.

Secondly, they will be encouraged to help others, just like they were when they first came. This will give them a sense of purpose and increase their self-worth. It has been scientifically proven that helping others releases more dopamine than receiving it. The sense of accomplishment and pride that they will experience when someone else escapes will be second to none.

**Features**

* **Connecting People**

We want to bring together victims, survivors and volunteers all in the same place. The survivors can share their stories and guide others on their way. Volunteers can also provide help. Based on a user’s location local groups of up to 10 people will be formed. This will help them connect more intimately with each other and in case of any emergency they can be the first responders and help the authorities. They can also act as witnesses. People who were helped by this community will be eager to give back to the community. Hence, creating a virtuous cycle.

* **Secured**

Encryption is our key feature and to protect the user’s chat history from any potential harm or threat, implementation of a self-destructive feature is done where users can not only clear data manually but also set it to up to be automatically deleted.

* **Users have the control**

The users have the absolute control and no action will be taken on their behalf. Our motive is to remove the fear that is instilled in the mind of the victims about the repercussions that their action might trigger and to make them independent and strong to stand through it. However, if a user is found to be suffering from suicidal tendency, our volunteers will be right there to help them out.

* **Events**

Frequent events and competitions will be organized, both live and online. These include cooking, origami, language proficiency etc. In a world where women are still underrepresented, these events will act as vocational skills disguised as fun competitions. Having employable skills will go a long way in boosting their confidence and expediting the process of their escape.

* **Sentiment analysis**

We are using Azure’s sentiment analysis API to flag potentially suicidal posts. Users can report posts manually as well. Flagged posts are reviewed by qualified human moderators who then make the final call to launch a report to proper authorities. The local group of the user will be informed and guided as well so that immediate help can be provided. Seeing a fellow victim in grave danger will spur the local groups into action and they will be eager to help as well. This will instil them with a sense of purpose as well and the satisfaction on seeing a fellow victim make a better life for herself will give them hope for themselves.

* **Like & Support**

Users can interact with the posts in various ways:

Comments: They can comment on any post and tag other users.

Like: They can show their appreciation of the post by liking it.

Support: They can also show their solidarity by clicking on the support button. It is for the cases where liking is not an appropriate response and support showcases their feelings better.

Share: They can share the posts on their own profile that will be shown to their friends.

Separating the like and support button also allows us to categorize posts. The posts with a high like to support ration is more likely to be a positive story than a post with low ratio. Using this we can deliberately show user motivating and positive posts if their activity recently has been negative.

* **Spoofing**

We understand that our users most likely don’t have much freedom at home and if the abusers were to find out that they are seeking and providing help, they may face further problems. To prevent this, our logo at the top of the website doubles as a spoof button. It opens a random innocuous page (say, mom’s pie recipes) when clicked providing a better way for the users to cover their tracks than suddenly switching their device off which increases suspicion even further.

* **Email services**

We will keep our users updated about the recent changes in their account. It will be a non-intrusive way to keep them engaged.

* **Volunteers**

Volunteers can also sign up to help others. They will act as emotional support and can also receive guidance on how to help someone they know who needs it. Some selected volunteers will also act as moderators for reporting suicidal posts to authorities.

* **Motivational posts**

Motivational posts, whether user generated or system generated, will be shown organically within the feed. In fact, the home screen that users will see when visiting the website for their first time will contain 70/30 split of user posted happy posts and their past stories. It will remind them of the light at the end of the tunnel.

* **No ads**

No ads will be served to our users. Instead of ads we will serve motivational content in 90/10 split (i.e. 90% organic posts and 10% motivational content). This will include motivational posts and information about helplines to remind users that help is always present and all they have to do is reach for it. The support and like separation will be useful here as well. The trending posts will be displayed on the home page, majority of which will be positive and uplifting.

**Marketing**

To get it off the ground we plan to team up with NGOs. This will get us the initial user base of people already involved in this community. Then by promoting the website on social media we will gain more users.

We plan to keep our site free because this was not made to earn money, the motivation was to give back to the society. To offset the cost getting investors and sponsors will be crucial down the road.

Once the site has initial user base, word of mouth will be pretty strong and we will be able to reduce the advertisements considerably. Additionally, the ads will only be run in locations where we have already partnered up with a NGO, this will ensure we have immediate help available in case a user needs it.

**Our Team**

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