Instructions

Read a pair of online mental health posts, and describe their characteristics.

Content Warning

The study contains posts including but not limited to self-harm and suicidal ideation, which may be disturbing to you. If you have concerns or questions, please send us an email. If you have strong negative reactions to some of the content, please reach out at crisis text line (https://www.crisistextline.org/)

The Setting

What will you read?

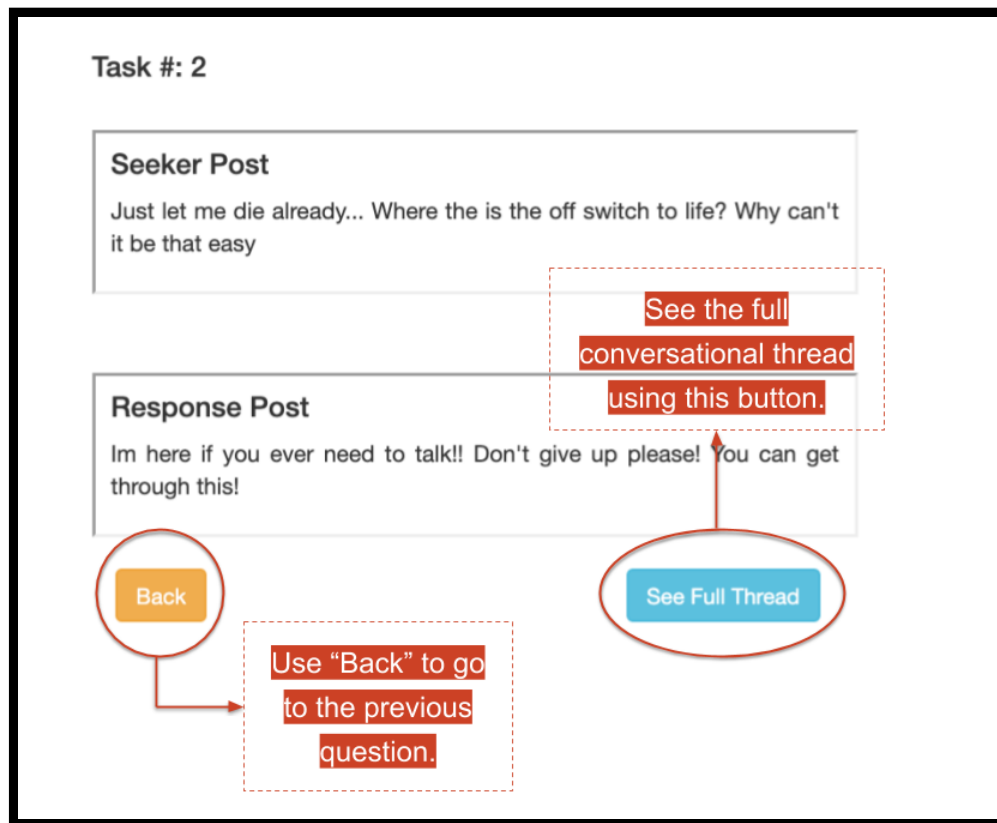You will be shown two posts to read - a seeker post and a responder post. Details below:

- **Seeker Post:** This would be typically a mental health support seeking post, posted online by a user in distress. The user in distress is referred to as *Seeker.*
- **Response Post:** This is a response/reply posted by another user in response to the seeker post, usually in an attempt to provide mental health support to the seeker.

These posts are part of a longer online conversation between multiple users (an online *thread*, similar to forums such as Reddit (https://www.reddit.com/)). You will have access to this thread while conducting the annotation task using the **See Full Thread** button (See Below). Use it if you need more context for annotation (e.g. responses by other users; future interactions).
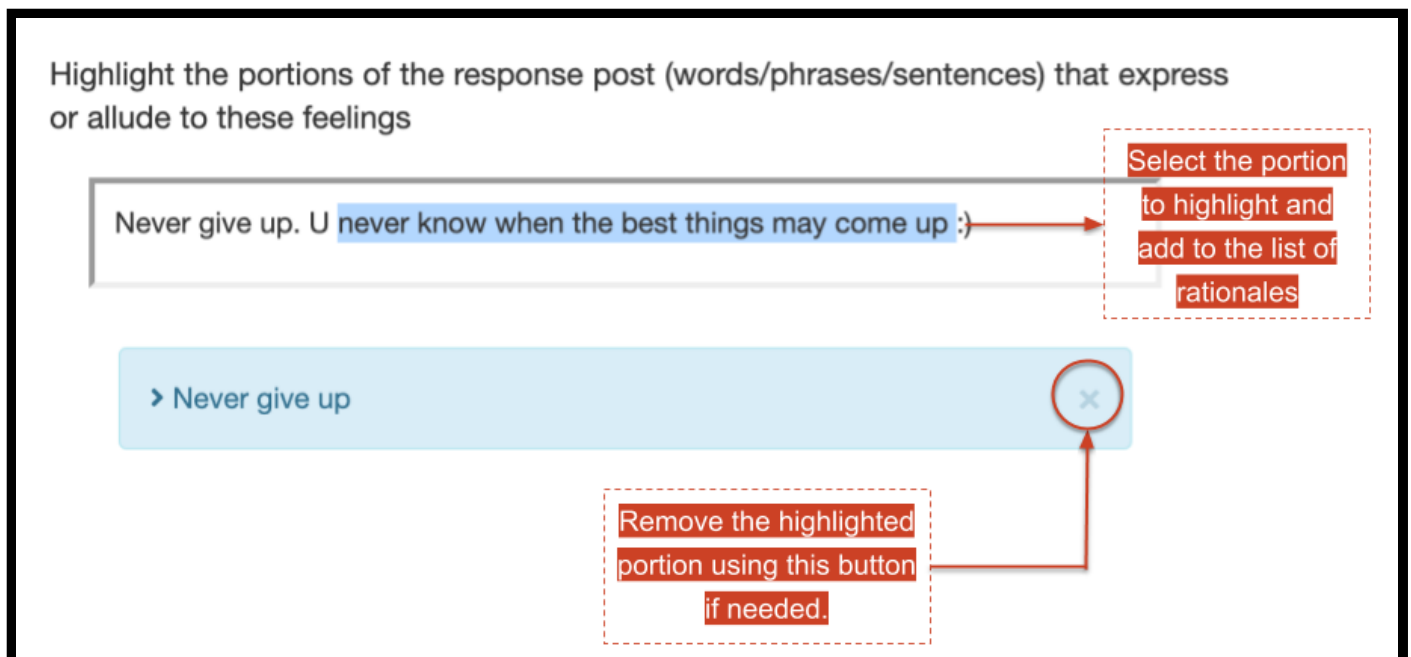
What will you annotate?

You will perform the following two types of annotations for each pair of posts:

1. You will answer **four questions related to the characteristics of the seeker post and the response post**. For each pair of posts, you will be able to move between the these four questions using the **Back** and the **Next** button.

Task #: 2

Seeker Post

Just let me die already... Where the is the off switch to life? Why can't it be that easy

Response Post

Im here if you ever need to talk!! Don't give up please! You can get through this!

See the full conversational thread using this button.

Back

See Full Thread

Use "Back" to go to the previous question.

2. As a follow-up to some of your answers, you will be asked to **highlight portions of the post that were the rationale behind your answer**.

    o You can highlight multiple suitable portions and they will keep getting added to the list of rationales. In case you want to remove any of the portions you highlighted, remove it using the cross(x) button as shown below.

Highlight the portions of the response post (words/phrases/sentences) that express or allude to these feelings

Never give up. U never know when the best things may come up :)

Select the portion to highlight and add to the list of rationales

> Never give up

Remove the highlighted portion using this button if needed.

Throughout this annotation scheme, we make use of the terms *emotions* and *feelings*. For a general

background on the set of emotions, please refer the Plutchik's wheel of emotions (https://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Motivation_and_emotion/Book/2014/Plutchik%27s_wheel_of_emotions), which is what we follow unless otherwise specified (e.g. for warmth, compassion, hope - see below).

Annotation Task

1) [Mental Health Related] Is the seeker talking about a **mental health** related issue or situation in his/her post?

How to annotate?
- Consider a **broad set of situations** that may have mental health effects including daily life events such as *school, work, relationships, parenting,* etc.
- Look for two aspects of the seeker post:
    - Is the seeker talking about an issue or situation?
    - Is the issue/situation related to mental health?
- Note that the seeker may be writing about a mental health issue faced by themselves, their friends, family members, or people in general. All of them should be annotated with a **Yes**.

Examples:
- Annotate **Yes** for the seeker post "*I am struggling with thoughts of self-harm, someone please help*"
- Annotate **No** for the seeker post "*Goodnight you beautiful people*"

See More Examples

The rest of the annotation will be automatically skipped if your answer to this question is **No**.

2) [Emotional Reactions] Does the response **express or allude to warmth, compassion, concern** or similar feelings of the responder towards the seeker?

How to annotate?
- The annotation would be *one* of the following:
    - No
    - Yes, the response alludes to these feelings but the feelings are *not* explicitly expressed
    - Yes, the response has an *explicit* mention of these feelings
- Distinguish between responses with **explicit mention of feelings** (e.g. *I feel sorry for you.*) and responses that sound emotional without the feelings being explicitly expressed (e.g. *Please never give up on yourself.*).

- You should be looking at the **feelings of the responder towards the seeker**.

Explicit mention of feelings of warmth, compassion, concern

- Presence of the following type of sentences in the response post is a strong indicator of **explicit mention of feelings** of warmth, compassion, concern:
    - Sentences where the **feelings are labeled using phrases** such as "I feel sad..", "I'm sad..", "I'm concerned...", etc. and the feelings are targeted towards the seeker. E.g. *"I'm feeling sad for you"*, "*I feel sorry for you*"
    - Sentences where the responders describe **what they felt after reading** the seeker post. E.g. "*This makes me sad*"
    - Sentences containing **exclamatory expressions** such as "Oh man", "Oh god", "many hugs". E.g. "Oh man! I hope you get better soon"

Alluding to the feelings of warmth, compassion, concern

- Responses **alluding to the feelings** of warmth, compassion, concern will typically **sound emotional while reading** without an explicit mention of feelings as in the previous case. Presence of the following type of sentences in the response post is a strong indicator of these types of responses:
    - **Appreciation** of the seeker's qualities and their past efforts. E.g. "*You are doing an amazing job*", "*I appreciate that you are in touch with your friends*".
    - **Reducing self-blame** of the seeker and trying to alleviate the seeker's feelings of guilt about the situation. E.g. "*You have nothing to be ashamed of*", "*You are not ugly*"
    - **Validation** of the seeker's perspective on the situation. E.g. "*So agree with you on this!*"
    - **Inculcating hope and confidence** in the seeker and suggesting that favourable outcomes are possible. E.g. "*I hope you get better soon*", "*Everything will be fine!*"
    - **Encouraging continued efforts / perseverance**. E.g. "*Please never give up on yourself!*"
    - **Offering to spend time** with the seeker. E.g. "*I'm here, drop a message if you want to talk about it*"
    - **Describing the seeker's situation / condition**. E.g. "*This must be terrible*"
    - **Conveying understanding** of the seeker's situation. E.g. "*I know how you feel*"

What to annotate as *No*

- The following type of response posts should be annotated with **No**:
    - Responses *only* providing **factual information** (e.g. *mindful meditation is great for anxiety*)
    - Responses *only* suggesting **specific actions** (e.g. *Avoid her for some time and don't say anything*)
    - Responses which **do *not* sound emotional** to you **while reading**

Examples

- Annotate **No** for the response post "*You need to take a deep breath and stop thinking about it*"
- Annotate **Yes, alluding to feelings without being explicitly expressed** for the response post "*Your mind is very wrong you are very important, you deserve to live and be happy*"
- Annotate **Yes, with explicit mention of feelings** for the response post "*I'm so sorry you lost her*"

3) [Interpretations] Does the response **communicate an understanding** of the seeker's experiences and feelings? In what manner?

How to annotate?

- The annotation would be *one* of the following:
    - No
    - Yes, the response communicates an understanding of the seeker's experiences and/or feelings

- If your answer to the above question is **Yes**, you will be asked to annotate the way(s) in which this understanding is communicated. The annotations would be *one* or *more* of the following:
    - The response contains conjectures or speculations about the seeker's experiences and/or feelings
    - The responder has reflected back on similar experiences of their own or others
    - The responder has *also* described similar experiences of their own or others
    - The response contains paraphrases of the seeker's experiences and/or feelings

- We want to know if the responder is **talking** about his/her understanding of the experiences and feelings of the seeker.

Communication of Understanding

- The following type of response posts communicate an understanding of the seeker's experiences and feelings and should be annotated with a **Yes**:
    - Responses with an **explicit mention** of the understanding (e.g. *I understand how you feel*).
    - Responses with **inferences**, **conjectures**, or **speculations** derived after reading the seeker post (e.g. *It must be terrible*).
    - Responses in which the responder **reflects on similar experiences** (e.g. *it often happens to me too*) and/or containing descriptions of those reflections (e.g. *I also had anxiety attacks when I was in school*).
    - Responses containing **paraphrases** of what the seeker has said.

What to annotate as *No*

- Direct advice and factual information *may* indicate an understanding of the seeker's experiences but **do not count** towards the communications of understanding. The responses *only* having direct advice and/or factual information should be annotated with a **No.**

- Responses *only* trying to **learn more about the seeker** should be annotated under Explorations (e.g. *It must be depressing, right?*; see question 4).

Examples

- Annotate **No** for the response post "*You're not alone*"

- Annotate **Yes** and the **responder has reflected back on similar experiences of their own or others** for the following pair:

> **S:** *I'm about to have an anxiety attack.*
> **R:** *I suffer from anxiety and I feel like I'm going to have one too. So you are not alone, I know exactly how you feel.*

See More Examples

4) [Explorations] Does the response **make an attempt to explore** the seeker's experiences and feelings?

How to annotate?

- The annotation will be *one* of the following:
    - No
    - Yes, but the exploration is *generic*
    - Yes, and the exploration is *specific*

- We want to know if the responder wants to **learn more about the seeker**.

Intent to explore

- The responses to be annotated with a **Yes** will contain **prompts for more information**, typically framed as a question (e.g. *Are you feeling depressed?*).

- The responder in these responses will show a **direct intent to explore**.

- Moreover, the responses will be **focused on the seeker**, and will try to gain more information about the seeker's world (including the seeker's friends, family, etc.).

Specific Explorations

- Distinguish between responses that contain **generic explorations** (e.g. *What happened?*) and the **responses in which the exploration is specific**, labeling the seeker's experiences and feelings which the responder wants to explore.

- Specific explorations **label** the seeker's experiences and feelings which the responder wants to explore.

Generic Explorations

- Any response that **does *not* specify the experience/feeling/situation of the seeker** which the responder wants to explore should be annotated as a generic exploration. Examples of **generic explorations** are:
    - *What do you want to do next?*
    - *How can I help you?*

- *Can you help me understand your situation?*
- *What happened?*

Non-Question Explorations

- Some exploratory responses **may *not* be phrased as a question**, but will have the same goal of prompting the user for more information. E.g. *I would like to know more*. These should also be annotated as **explorations**.

What to annotate as *No*

- Responses *only* containing direct instructions on what to do based on **unstated speculations** should be annotated with a **No**.
- Responses *only* containing **offers to talk** made by the responder should be annotated as **No**. Some examples are:
  - *If you want to discuss anything, I'm here!*
  - *Send me a direct message, if you want to talk*

- **Speculations** or **Conjectures** about the seeker **not phrased in a way to seek more information** should be annotated *Yes* under Interpretations (question 3) and **No** here (question 4). For example,
  - "*It must be depressing*" should be annotated **No** but "*It must be depressing, right?*" should be annotated **Yes**. Also, "*Are you feeling depressed?*" should be annotated **Yes**

- While most questions are likely to be explorations about the seeker's world, there might be cases where the questions are about the responder themselves (e.g. "*What do you think I would have done?*"). These types of non-seeker focused questions should be annotated with a **No**.

Examples

- Annotate **No** for the response post "*I am going through the exact same thing*"
- Annotate **Yes, but the exploration is *generic*** for the response post "*What's wrong?*"
- Annotate **Yes, and the exploration is specific** for the following pair:

> **S:** *Yesterday, I was drugged by my friend. I want to tell my boyfriend, but he is a good friend of that guy.*
> **R:** *But you also don't want him to do anything to you or your boyfriend ever, right?*

See More Examples