



# Are we traumatizing you?

Jordan Craig, Director - Content Design @Twitter

# Jordan Craig

Pronouns: She / Her

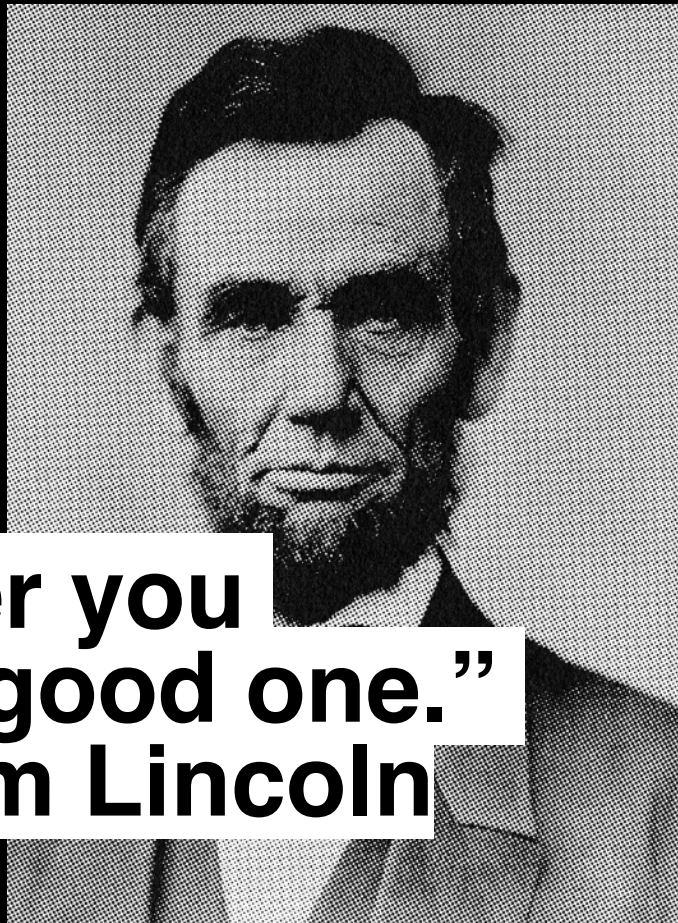
Director of Content Design

[@JordanEllyse](#)









**“Whatever you  
are, be a good one.”  
– Abraham Lincoln**



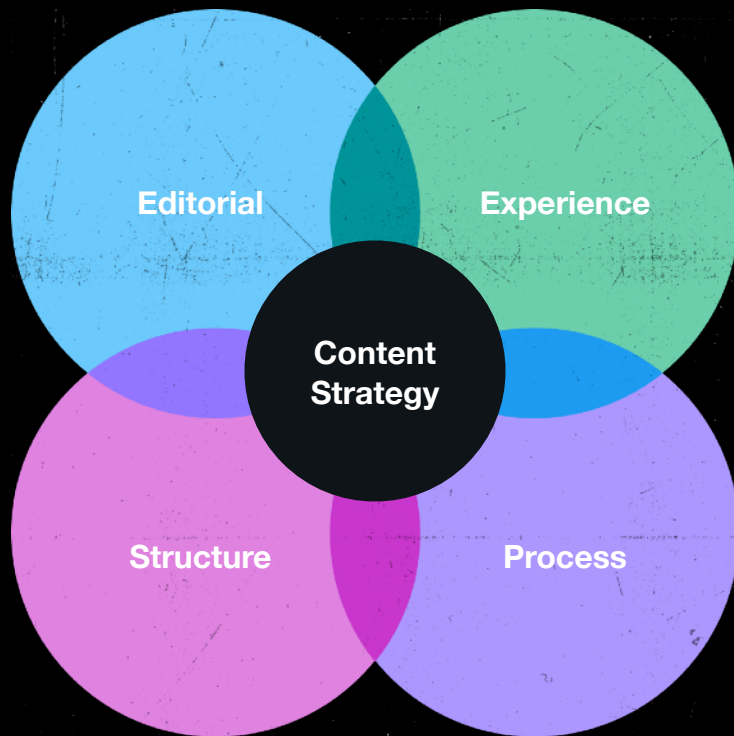
**This is a human  
problem — one in which our  
platform has an outsized role  
to play.**



**Twitter is where everybody joins the global conversation on their own terms.**



Content Design



Systems Design



# Our vision

It's ambitious: Set the global example for how social media can be more inclusive, accountable, and equitable for everyone.



# Our values

#HumanRights

#DigitalCivilLiberties

#ThePublicConversation



THEIR  
FIGHT  
is OUR  
FIGHT

# Our purpose

We're the voice of Twitter within the product. Our purpose is to encourage healthy conversations, amplify credible voices, and provide a safe space for people of all identities—especially those from historically excluded communities.



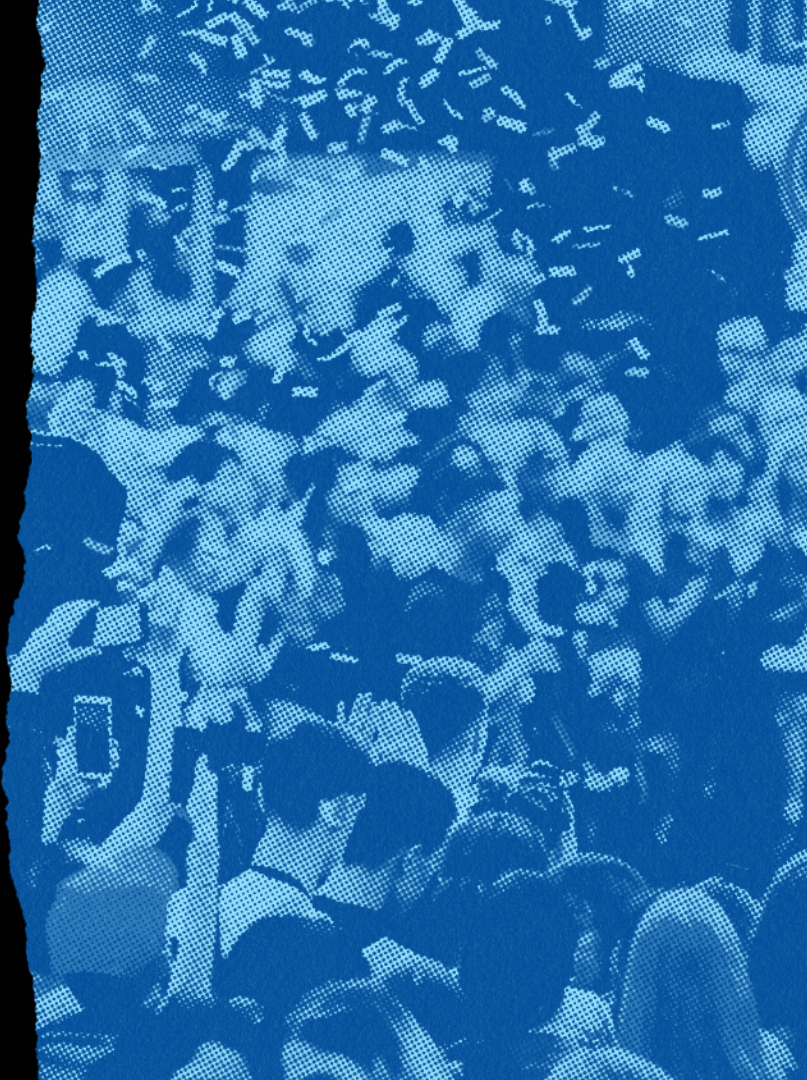
# Our job

Our first job, always, is to provide useful, usable, effective content that responds to customers' needs. We do this by collaborating with our XFN partners at the earliest stages of a project so that the words we write inform the design — not just fill up the space.



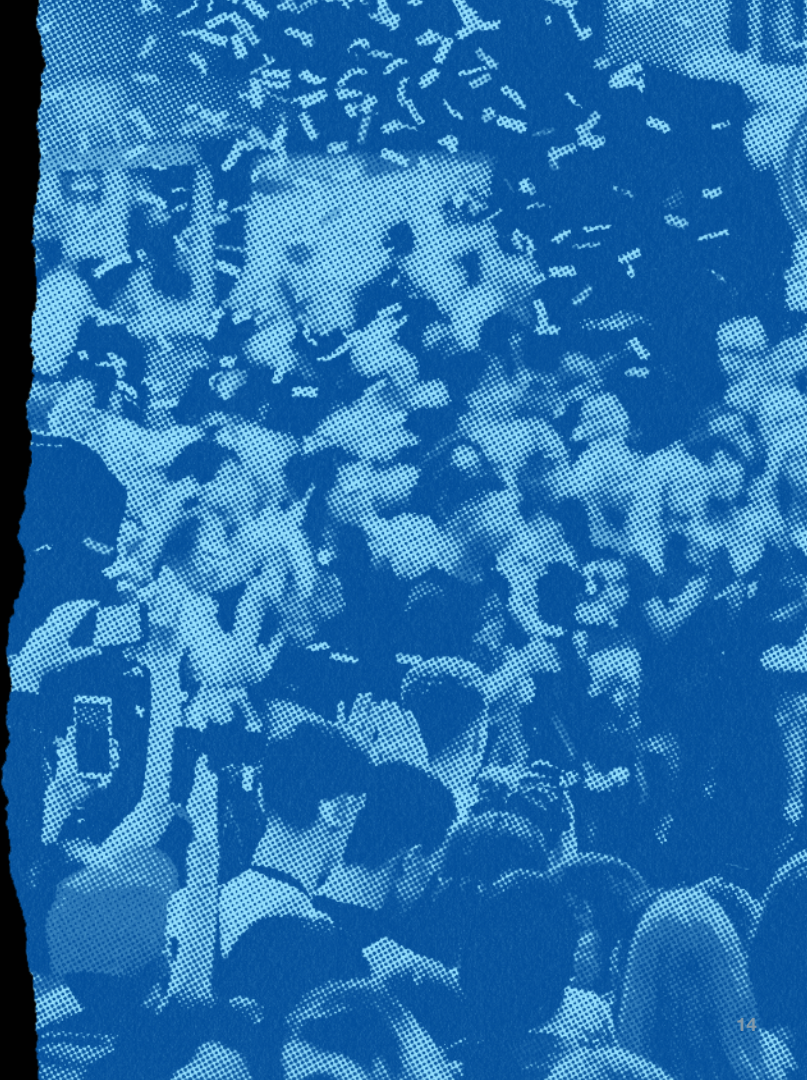
# Our mandate

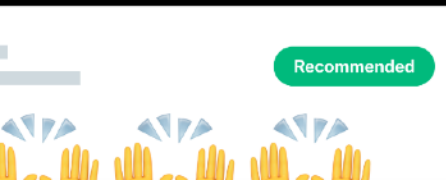
For Twitter to thrive, we need to bring more people into the conversation. With that, we have a mandate to reduce the impact of known harms and to promote healthy conversations so that people feel safe to express ideas freely.



# Our philosophy

Culture in constant flux – new threats, new loopholes to exploit, and new language to consider. Learning is at the core of what we do so we can better meet our customers ever changing needs.







REAL TALK

REAL TALK

**REAL TALK**

REAL TALK

REAL TALK







**A healthy Twitter  
is many things...**



It's about  
free expression





**But there are trade-offs  
between safety, privacy, and  
free speech.**



## Trade-offs

- **Education**
- **Enforcement**
- **Deamplification**
- **Transparency**
- **Control**
- **Context**
- **A way to let us know how we're doing**



## Trade-offs

**It's about responding quickly and satisfactorily when people report harmful content or appeal our enforcement decisions.**



It's about balancing  
free expression with  
safety and privacy  
through product  
mechanics.





**A focus on health is the  
right thing to do — for our  
customers, for our  
business, and for society  
at large.**





# Some people say they don't trust us

- First-person reporters
- Bystander reporters
- People from historically excluded communities, especially trans people of color
- People with a large volume of unwanted interactions, like creators, celebrities, and female journalists



# Studies show ...

*Amnesty International  
study (2017) and MIT  
study (2018)*

No. of rule-breaking Tweets **<1%**

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Time to action unhealthy Tweets **2-3 hrs**

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Frequency of abusive Tweets **30 secs**

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Speed of misinfo spread **6x faster**

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Likelihood of misinfo Retweets **+70%**

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Be A King  
@BerniceKing



Racism is not a difference of opinion.

6 Jun 2020

406

47.3K

163.3K



CLEAR CHANNEL

000344

Parking For:  
Mercedes Benz  
State Farm Arena



We need  
to fix this.





BUT HOW?

BUT HOW?

**BUT HOW?**

BUT HOW?

BUT HOW?



UNTIL NOW

UNTIL NOW

**UNTIL NOW**

UNTIL NOW

UNTIL NOW



# Trauma-informed content design



# Trauma-informed care

➔ Trauma-informed  
content design





**Trauma-informed content design asks us to examine existing and new systems and products to see how they could harm traumatized users.**



# Why this is important

When you experience something, it's harder for your brain to process information, which can make technology feel overwhelming.





BUT HOW?

BUT HOW?

**BUT HOW?**

BUT HOW?

BUT HOW?



# TICD framework

- 1 Avoid re-traumatization
- 2 Set clear and consistent expectations
- 3 Create a respectful and welcoming space
- 4 Be trustworthy and transparent
- 5 Prioritize emotional and physical safety
- 6 Foster empowerment, voice, and choice
- 7 Consider cultural, historical, and gender experiences



# Avoid re-traumatization

At every stage of the design process, for every word, ask yourself—will this re-traumatize your audience?

- Default to privacy
- Hide distressing and violative content so people have to opt in to see it



# Set clear and consistent expectations

Be transparent to mitigate stress that can come from the unexpected and unknown.

- From the very start, tell people what to expect
- Provide markers and signals that let them know exactly where they are in the process



# Create a respectful and welcoming space

Think about the last time someone made you feel respected and welcomed. What language did they use? How did they speak to you?

- Write how people talk
- Use language that respects their boundaries
- Phrase headings as questions as much as possible



# Be trustworthy and transparent

Trust is earned, and transparency inspires trust. Don't make promises you can't keep.

- Have an omnipresent info button
- When making key decisions, use: “We know we don't always get it right. So if you think we made a mistake, you can [recourse action].”





# Prioritize emotional and physical safety

Remember, safety means different things to different people.

- Use language that affirms their experience
- If someone's in physical danger, tell them how to ensure their safety



# Foster empowerment, voice, and choice

Never back people into a corner.

- Give multiple people options when key decisions are being made
- Provide opportunities for them to voice concerns, add context, and give feedback



# Consider culture, historical, and gender experiences

Remember who we are writing for

- Include historically-excluded communities in your research
- Use inclusive language



# Trauma-informed care principles

1

## Safety

Staff and the people they serve feel physically and psychologically safe. Understanding safety as defined by those we serve is a high priority.

2

## Trustworthiness and transparency

Organizational operations and decisions are conducted with transparency with the goal of building and maintaining trust.

3

## Peer support

Peer support and mutual self-help are key vehicles for establishing safety and hope, building trust, enhancing collaboration, and utilizing their stories and lived experience to promote recovery and healing.



# Trauma-informed care principles

4

## **Collaboration and mutuality**

The organization recognizes that everyone has a role to play in a trauma-informed approach.

5

## **Empowerment, voice, and choice**

Clients are supported in shared decision-making, choice, and goal setting. Staff are empowered to do their work as well as possible.

6

## **Cultural, historical, and gender issues**

The organization actively moves past cultural stereotypes and biases—incorporating policies, protocols, and processes that are responsive to the racial, ethnic, and cultural needs of individuals served, and that recognize and address historical trauma.



VOICE & TONE

VOICE & TONE

**VOICE & TONE**

VOICE & TONE

VOICE & TONE



# Words affect action

The words we use across our ecosystem influence how people feel and behave.

How do we flex our voice to invite, promote, and champion healthy conversations?



I want to **avoid being re-traumatized**, have boundaries respected, and have my emotional and physical safety protected. I want **validation and affirmation**, choice and agency, and **clear and consistent experiences**.





### How brand voice flexes in the product

We're functional and fun. Customer sentiment informs which voice attributes we choose.

### Our tone is our mood. It's how we say what we say.

Saying the right thing with the wrong tone can change the meaning. Choose the tone that will get the results you want.

#### Who we are

##### Helpful (Functional)

We connect people to valuable resources and context, giving encouragement and practical advice along the way.

We build trust and confidence when people know our values and understand our products.

##### Inclusive (Caring)

We're open, supportive, and welcoming to everyone. We have a global mindset, and accessibility is always top-of-mind.

We create safe spaces for everyone to grow and evolve their perspectives.

#### Who we're allowed to be

##### Bold (Expressive)

We tell it like it is, in a way that people can hear. We always try to do our best and we let you know when we fall short.

Conversation thrives when everyone can be their authentic self.

#### Who we are

##### Plainspoken

We write like we talk, with contractions, easy-going language, and plain, simple words.

Accessible language fuels participation.

##### Thoughtful

We anticipate and respond to people's needs, speak with sensitivity, and respect everyone's lived experience.

People feel empowered to share their point of view.

#### Who we're allowed to be

##### Playful, when we can

We convey the essential info, then add just a pinch of playfulness 🎈 to make things memorable.

A Twitterly vibe brightens things up — but if used in the wrong context, we can sound disingenuous.

##### Transparent

We let you know what to expect from us, and what we expect from you. We explain why we make certain decisions and use certain tools.

Transparency invites trust.

##### Humble

We know we don't always get it right, so we own it and ask how we can make it better.

When people have a voice in the process, they're more likely to trust the outcome.

##### Opinionated, when it's called for

We take risks that make things better and more equitable for people. When the stakes are high (think real world harm), we don't mince words.

We stand for what we believe in.

##### Informative

We tell people what they need to know, paying attention to context, intent, and emotion.

Meaningful information, not hype, is what encourages participation.

##### Reassuring

We meet people where they are by addressing their fears and doubts head-on and offering support and encouragement.

People feel safe to participate on Twitter.

##### Authoritative, when needed

When we take action on content, we leave no doubt about who's doing what and why — and what our actions mean for others.

Clarity banishes uncertainty.







# STORY TIME










**Zara**   
@ZaraSay  
s





7:35PM · Jan 15, 2021

**Robert798**  
@CantTouchThis

7:35PM · Jan 15, 2021

 Report Tweet



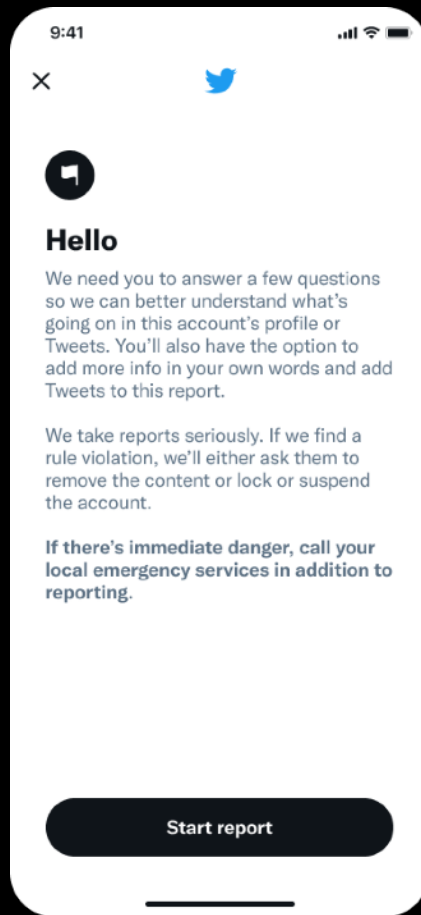
Cancel



# This first thing Zara sees is this welcome screen

“It’s comforting and welcoming... When you see something that you need to report, you feel agitated or anxious. And when you see ‘Hello,’ it feels like someone is there to help.”

— Research participant





# Zara chooses a category

“I like it. It feels... personal. I am experiencing this. It makes me feel real.”

— Research participant

9:41

←

**Gathering info**

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**I'm being ...**

[Why are we asking this?](#)

**Attacked because of my identity**

Slurs, misgendering, racist or sexist stereotypes, encouraging others to harass, sending hateful imagery

**Harassed or intimidated with violence**

Sexual harassment, group harassment, insults or name calling, posting private info, threatening to expose private info, violent event denial, violent threats, celebration of violent acts

**Spammed**

Posting malicious links, misusing hashtags, fake engagement, repetitive replies, Retweets, or Direct Messages

**Shown content related to or encouraged to self-harm**

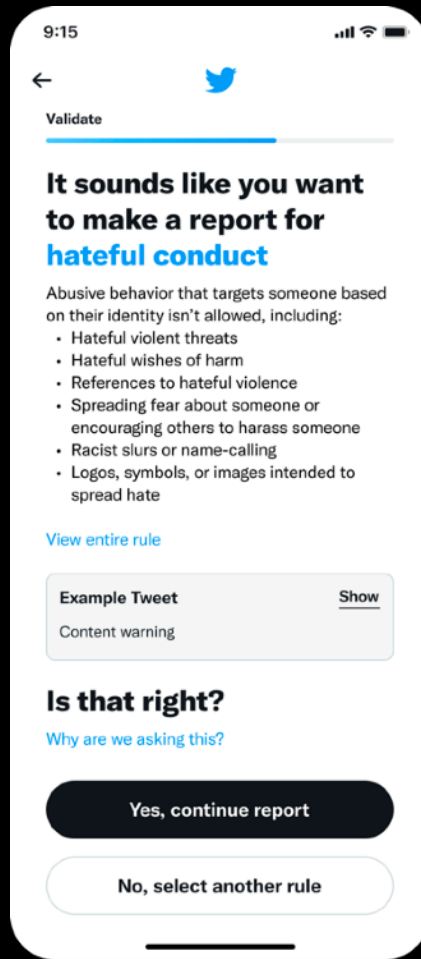
**Shown sensitive or disturbing content**

Consensual nudity and sexual acts, non-consensual nudity, unnecessary gore, graphic violence, symbol or image intended to spread hate based on someone's identity

**Shown misleading info**

Offered tips or currency — or encouraged to send them — in a

Zara confirms that  
this rule aligns with  
their situation

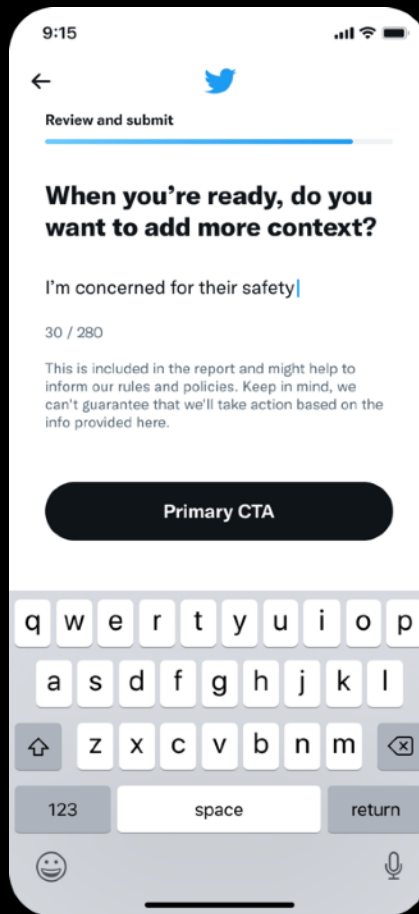




# Zara adds context to this report

“I appreciate having [the ability to add context. It makes me feel hopeful because you have the option to explain in your own words.”

— Research participant





# Zara submits the report



9:15 📶 🔋

← 🐦

Review and submit

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**Let's make sure we have this right**

This report is for myself.

I'm being attacked because of my identity.  
@GrayhamSays is doing this by using slurs and encouraging others to harass me.

@GrayhamSays is targeting me because of my race, ethnicity, caste, or national origin.

@GrayhamSays might be violating Twitter's hateful conduct rule.

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**Add more info (optional)**

Other Tweets by @GrayhamSays

Additional context





# When should I use TICD?

Incorporating a trauma-informed approach in the beginning of the project — before there are even wireframes — really helps ensure that you're always designing and writing with these principles in mind.



# It's never too early to start

...

Incorporating a trauma-informed approach in the beginning of the project — before there are even wireframes — really helps ensure that you're always designing and writing with these principles in mind.



**When I file a report, appeal an enforcement decision, or otherwise need health-related support, I want to understand what to expect—and to receive a timely, satisfactory response.**



# The copy and categories are structured as a convo

**Hello. Who is this report for?**

Myself. I'm being... sexually harassed.

**How is @username doing this?**

They're using slurs and encouraging others to harass me.

**Last question. Are they targeting you because of your identity?\***

Yes, my gender identity.

**It sounds like you want to make a report for hateful conduct. Is that right?**

Yes, continue report.

**When you're ready, do you want to add more context?**

This isn't the first time they've done this.

**We know it wasn't easy, so we appreciate you taking the time to answer those questions. Our team will review your report as soon as they can. Here are some other things you can do in the meantime.**



WRAP IT UP

WRAP IT UP

**WRAP IT UP**

WRAP IT UP

WRAP IT UP



**Great ideas can come  
from anyone and  
anywhere.**



**Facilitate conversations.**  
**Listen. Iterate.**



**#ContinuousLearning and  
#DeepCustomerEmpathy**





# Learn more

**Shout out to Twitter health researchers for compiling many of these resources!**

[🔗 SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](#)

[🔗 To Build Gentler Technology, Practice Trauma-Informed Design](#)

[🔗 Trauma-informed design: understanding trauma and healing](#)

[🔗 Using a Trauma-Informed, Socially Just Research Framework with Marginalized Populations: Practices and Barriers to Implementation](#)

[🔗 Trauma-informed Interviewing Skills Guide](#)



THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!

**THANK YOU!**

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!