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Peer Group Chat

Date: 5.10.23

Title: Social Media – To Engage, or Not To Engage?

Description: We can often want to keep up to date with friends as well as current news and events – but despite the positives, sometimes what we see on social media may be upsetting, overwhelming, or triggering. Join this conversation to talk together about the potential pros and cons of engaging with social media and how we can look after ourselves when engaging with social media.

Amber22 (PSW)	Hi everyone. First, we'd like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands we are all joining this event from. We pay deep respect to the Elders of those Countries, past and present, and we further extend that respect to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people joining this group tonight. Welcome everyone to today's Peer Group Chat talking about Social Media- To Engage, Or Not To Engage?
Amber22 (PSW)	Welcome! @ziggyhee
TideisTurning (PSW)	Welcome @ziggyhee :) We'll get started soon

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Amber22 (PSW)	<p>Tonight, Peer Support Workers @amber22 and @TideisTurning will be facilitating a discussion around the topic of Social Media- To Engage, Or Not To Engage? Whether you have lived experience of complex mental health issues, you care for someone who does, or both, it is important to know how social media might be affecting us. We'll be moving through a number of discussion questions tonight, and it's entirely up to you how much or how little you are comfortable with sharing. Some of the conversation may be heavy in nature as we talk about how social media might negatively affect us. @tyme, who moderates on the SANE Forums, is working behind the scenes to ensure our safety. If you're having any technical difficulties, please see our FAQ (https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat/chat-faqs) or message @tyme. We're looking forward to creating a space where we can reflect and learn more together about Social Media- To Engage, Or Not To Engage?</p>
Amber22 (PSW)	<p>Within this group tonight we'll be talking about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Our engagement with social media & it's impact on our wellbeing- Pros & cons of engaging with social media- Ways to balance our social media engagement
Amber22 (PSW)	Hey! @Captain24
Captain24	Hi
TideisTurning (PSW)	Hi there @Captain24 :)
Amber22 (PSW)	<p>Welcome everyone! We will be starting the discussion shortly, and will just allow a bit more time for people to log on and join. In the meantime, feel free to introduce yourselves & share a self care plan for after we wrap up the discussion his evening. I'm @amber22</p>
Amber22 (PSW)	Welcome! @Dez :)
TideisTurning (PSW)	Hi @Dez :)
Dez	Hi all
Amber22 (PSW)	Welcome @Jacques :)

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tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	Hello all!
Jacques	hello ladies, gentlemen and gender neutral peoples
Amber22 (PSW)	My self care plan for tonight is having a big cup of tea and a hot shower afterwards
Jacques	my self care for tonight is having a piece of cake i made this afternoon with a coffee and watch some tv with my partner.
Amber22 (PSW)	Delish! @Jacques
TideisTurning (PSW)	Sounds like a great plan @Amber22 (PSW) :)
Amber22 (PSW)	Let's get started with our first question for the night ... Q1: What are your experiences with social media?
Captain24	I only have Facebook. I guess it's a way of keeping in sort of in contact with others
TideisTurning (PSW)	My experiences with social media have been quite varied. It is something that for the last few years I have rarely, if ever, engaged with. Only recently have I started contemplating engaging with social media more at the request of a physically distant loved one
Jacques	i have experianced the very good social media has to offer and the very worst, it can connect people and it can cause isolation and drama. im not sure how much detail im allowed to go into for examples, but a gaming friend had to have police protection because someone was threatning to kill him and his family over a game. i have also seen the best people wanting to hurt themselves and reaching out to people on social media
Amber22 (PSW)	Hey! @Snowie
ziggyhee	social media helps me with connecting to like-minded people or people experiencing similar challenges. it can be quite supportive and helpful sometimes.
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	I can't say I'm connected with any social media apps. I just feel people are 'watching' me.

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TideisTurning (PSW)	Hi @Snowie :)
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	I guess SANE forums is the only 'social' media I use :)
Snowie	The social media I am in contact with is facebook. I rarely post on there and don't really comment on other peoples post. I find it too much at times. The thing I really only use is the Sane forum
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	I find Facebook sends me down a rabbit hole and it's so stressful
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	I chose to disengage with social media because I found like I was automatically comparing myself to others' lives and it depressed me.
Amber22 (PSW)	Nice responses everyone! Now onto our next question... Q2: How has social media impacted your wellbeing overall?
Jacques	i use facebook, discord, google chats most days, i think like all things take everything on them with a grain of salt and don't let other people get to you. it does have some really good things and can help with connection, i have a long distance relationship and we converse over facebook as well as the phone.
TideisTurning (PSW)	I hadn't thought of Sane Forums as a form of social media! That counts for me too in that case :)
Amber22 (PSW)	That is a really helpful way of looking at it! @Jacques
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	Sounds like you have made good use of the platforms you utilise
Captain24	It is a time waster. I scroll through a lot. I sometimes feel as though I have been left behind. So many people 'seem' to have their shit together and here I am just with less.
TideisTurning (PSW)	The biggest well-being impact of social media for me has been the very real potential to fall into the comparison trap, when what I see from others is their highlights reel, versus my brain often immediately going to look at my bloopers reel.

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Jacques	mostly my experiances have been ok, it helps me connect with the outside world, but it does prevent me from making real life friends, my psychiatrist is worried i only know people online and she said it is no replacement for real meaningful connections. i guess i like the anonimity and the option to walk away if i feel uncomfortable with anyone online. i have not had any good experiances with face to face friends.
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	I feel the same @Captain!
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	@Captain, I kept feeling that people had moved on with life but I was still 'stuck'... nowadays, I wouldn't care less.. I'm onwards and upwards! They are probably the ones left behind!
Dez	My prob is that I see too much negativity, and much like Saruman in LoR, I despair. Easily
Jacques	yes @Captain24 and @tyme (PSW/ Moderator) i feel the same with both your responses
Amber22 (PSW)	It can be a bit of a comparison trap, so I definitely get that! @Captain24
Snowie	I think social media has added stress to my life. You automatically compare yourself to others. I find it increases my isolation as I feel like such a disappointment compared to how others are living their lives. In saying that I recognise that people only post the 'good' things about their lives. To me facebook is more like bragbook.
TideisTurning (PSW)	It can be so tough @Jacques . I'm with you there
Amber22 (PSW)	Yep, definitely good to note that people don't post their bad days, social media is really just a highlight reel! @Snowie
Jacques	i guess for me it is my only connection to the outside world, as i don't socialise at all, i have no friends IRL and i don't go out or on hollidays so it is literally my only connection with what real life is.
TideisTurning (PSW)	I feel like I can see that @Snowie

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Captain24	I'm still stuck in it @tyme (PSW/ Moderator) I feel like I am nothing and I have nothing to offer, where others seem to have it so good.
ziggyhee	i think it depends on which social groups you have joined.
ziggyhee	for example, i joined the depression group on facebook. reading others' struggles actually give me some sense of calm
ziggyhee	like understanding it is not just me. all the same. and everyone is fighting. i can do that too.
TideisTurning (PSW)	That's a good point @ziggyhee . It can be hard to find what feels like the right fit!
Amber22 (PSW)	I'm glad that that group helps you, I do think it can be good for connection or feeling like you're a part of something @ziggyhee
ziggyhee	also other social platforms specific for people with mental health. sometimes it is harder to the needed support from everyday life. but those social groups can provide the support i need it sometimes.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Just chiming in to let you know I've got a lot from you through PGC & Forums :)
TideisTurning (PSW)	@Captain24
Amber22 (PSW)	Onto our third question of the night now ... Q3: What might be helpful or positive about social media for you?
Captain24	Thank you @TideisTurning (PSW) That means a lot and is something I needed to hear especially today
Jacques	positives for me is a form of social connection, to be able to keep up with latest trends, speech, topics, news and current affairs. it is my only outlet to the world. helps me feel like less of a ghost in this world.

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Captain24	Remain in contact with people. I posted a picture when I was on holidays. I had a Facebook friend reach out to me. It turns out we were in the same place at the same time and caught up for the first time in over 25yrs
TideisTurning (PSW)	Glad I could make something of a difference in a tough time @Captain24 <3
ziggyhee	social media indeed has helpful resources, but it does require some efforts to find them, and it is easy to be influenced by the unhelpful information. i am glad that i can find those helpful resources online and reach out to more people. so i am not stuck in my little territory..
Snowie	It helps me keep up to date with some family that live far away. I don't really see it as a positive however. I don't have any friends that I keep in contact with. The Sane forum has been positive, it has made me feel less alone in the world.
ziggyhee	yeah indeed also keep in touch with people who we just cannot meet in person anymore for any reason
Captain24	SANE has helped me in so many ways. TBH it think it has been a life saver
Amber22 (PSW)	Aw that is so good to hear @Captain24
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	SANE has been a lifesaver for me too. Connecting with people who understand makes a BIG difference.
Snowie	@Captain24 totally agree
Shaz51	Sorry NSW has daylight savings and I am in QLD
Snowie	Hi @Shaz51
Amber22 (PSW)	Time for our next question... Q4: What might be harmful or challenging about social media for you?
Amber22 (PSW)	Hey! @Shaz51 :)
TideisTurning (PSW)	All good @Shaz51 . You're here now!
Shaz51	Hello @Snowie

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Jacques	hi @Shaz51 hugs my friend.
ziggyhee	it can be easily addictive
Amber22 (PSW)	Very highly addicting for me! @ziggyhee
Shaz51	Hello @Amber22 (PSW) , @TideisTurning (PSW) , @Jacques
ziggyhee	yeah. very easy to lost self control sometimes!
Captain24	The comparison to others. I don't really post or comment because I'm scared that I will look stupid. It's still difficult with social phobia.
Jacques	social media has the downside of giving a false view of others, of society and of the world. it can also be manipulative because of the algorithms used it can feed prejudices and views and amplify them. it can also feed addiction and make us feel more isolated.
TideisTurning (PSW)	For me, as I mentioned earlier, the most challenging/harmful thing is my tendency to fall too quickly and easily into the comparison trap when looking at the social media updates of others. Something else I've found really challenging about social media is the superficial quality it can sometimes bring to relationships when my strong preference is for relationships to be more meaningful and personal. For example, I would much rather have someone send an individualised text on my birthday because they remember, rather than getting a standardised wish because they got a social media notification telling them my birthday had been.
Snowie	I try not to use social media much, I think it makes my depression worse, especially when I see everyone else living their lives. I think it adds to my loneliness too.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Wonderfully worded @Jacques ;)
Jacques	i feel the same @Snowie
Shaz51	For me I get more likes and comments then my husband

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Snowie	@TideisTurning (PSW) I totally agree with everything you have said. On my birthday last month I only got 2 texts from people. All the others were on facebook where it reminds you of when someones birthday is. Very superficial.
Shaz51	But then I feel sad because I will get all the likes and comments on social media but get nothing in real life
Snowie	@Shaz51 me too
TideisTurning (PSW)	I've known people who have a different birthday on FB for that exact reason @Snowie
Captain24	I find people will send a friend request but walk past you in the street and not acknowledge you
Amber22 (PSW)	That has happened to me before too! @Captain24
Shaz51	Very true @Captain24
Amber22 (PSW)	Onto our next question of the evening... Q5: Do you find social media more helpful or harmful for you? How/Why?
Snowie	@Captain24 sometimes I think people are just out to have as many friends as possible. Like a competition.
ziggyhee	half and half depending on... what i choose to browse or participate in.
Snowie	I think it depends too. Platforms like face book, twitter, etc are more harmful for me. But the Sane forum has been really helpful for me to connect with others who also have lived experiences.
Shaz51	Very true @ziggyhee , I like to let everyone that I amm still here even though I don't get any response in real life
Jacques	Q5 is a tough one, to be honest i really don't know, without it i would be totally isolated, with it it creates a lot of anxiety and distress. without sane i would not be alive. for me i guess it is a nessisary evil, i have to take the good and the bad to have some sort of connection.
Captain24	This chat is making me realise it's more harmful to me than helpful.

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TideisTurning (PSW)	To that end @Snowie & @Captain24 - what is a 'friend'? How do you define it?
Amber22 (PSW)	Sometimes it is good to have that realisation so that we can stick to the ones that we find more helpful! @Captain24
Shaz51	I feel Sane forum is different @Snowie then Facebook and others
Amber22 (PSW)	Maybe some sites and social medias are better for connection than others (and make us feel better as well) @Jacques
Jacques	i agree @Shaz51 there is a big difference between a support forum and social media.
TideisTurning (PSW)	I'd agree with that @Shaz51 - Forums are different
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	Maybe it's about finding which platform works for you for that point in your life?
Captain24	I find friends IRL are way more important @TideisTurning (PSW) . You can have connection and meaning conversations. A Facebook ‚Äðfriend‘ is mostly just for themselves.
ziggyhee	agree @tyme (PSW/ Moderator) it is about finding which types of social media work for us
Snowie	@TideisTurning (PSW) a friend is someone that actually connects with you and is there through the good and bad times. Out of the blue they will contact you. I don't respond to any messages on facebook. If they really want to see how I am they have my phone number. Might be why I never get messages.
Jacques	i have been hurt more by real life friends i had 20 years ago than i have ever been online. i find i don't understand how society works @Amber22 (PSW) maybe it is because i have autism maybe it is because i have not had many social interactions.
Amber22 (PSW)	Hugs @Jacques Society is confusing!!
Shaz51	I don't have any friends IRL @Captain24 , which is sad But if I go down town by myself, everyone will talk to me

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Captain24	I only have 3 @Shaz51 but 2 live away and I have distanced myself from them. As I think I'm just isolating myself from everything
TideisTurning (PSW)	Another big question! This is something I have been trying to weigh up for a little while in terms of deciding whether social media is something I want to engage with or not, and if it is, then how I might want or need that engagement to look. I am starting to see a few more positives, but I am a little hyper aware of the harms social media can have for me personally if I'm not careful. That was the major reason I did not engage with social media at all (with the exception of messaging applications- and Forums!) for a number of years.
Snowie	I guess it also takes two people to form a friendship. I could message people but I don't. In a way it is my fault as I isolate myself. If I see someone I know down the street I will turn around and walk away from them so I don't have to interact with them and do the 'small talk'.
TideisTurning (PSW)	It's tricky @Snowie . You're right- you could reach out, but so could the other person!
Jacques	i guess like most things @TideisTurning (PSW) it is what you make it, if you seek out positive things it will be a good experience, if you seek out the fake and hateful than it will be a negative experience.
ziggyhee	totally agree @Jacques we can choose what we want to participate in
Captain24	Same @Snowie I have a friend that messages me constantly and I never respond. I also hate small talk. That's why I go grocery shopping early in the morning.
Amber22 (PSW)	Time for question six... Q6: How might we be able to balance the positive and negative aspects of social media to prevent it adversely affecting us too much?
Shaz51	Totally agree @Jacques ,
TideisTurning (PSW)	Very true @Jacques . You're more likely to see what you're looking for
Snowie	@Captain24 I go early in the morning too so I don't run into people

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ziggyhee	i think discussions like these are helping us to be aware of the pros and cons, so we can be more mindful when we make choices
TideisTurning (PSW)	I do that too sometimes @Captain24 ! I've been so early, the cleaning carts are following right behind me! Haha
Shaz51	Do I keep going and. Doing which is the big question
Amber22 (PSW)	Me too! Or really late at night ...
Captain24	I think I need to consider my mental state before engaging in Facebook. I don't think it's overly healthy for me. The forums are really helpful in all aspects of my mental state. It would be nice to be more positive but it's the only place I feel comfortable sharing what is currently going on in my life.
Snowie	I think you have to be mindful of how much time you spend on social media. I try to limit myself, mainly because it makes my depression worse. In saying that I think it depends on what social media you are engaging with and how it affects you.
TideisTurning (PSW)	For me, I think it's about limiting engagement with social media. Then when I do engage with it being mindful of anything that comes up for me and trying to minimise or eliminate sources of anxiety or too many comparison trap triggers.
Snowie	The sane forums are a hard one. In one way it is the only place where I can be 'myself', but it can also trigger me alot.
Amber22 (PSW)	Hmm that can be really tricky, maybe avoiding the forums when you feel like you may be triggered more easily could be more helpful @Snowie
Captain24	I'm sorry. @Snowie

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Jacques	hmm, Q6 i have found for me if i get negatively impacted i take some time out for a day or two, it helps break any negative cycles i get into. for me i need to ballance my needs and wants on social media and try to stick to strict times on it and make my interactions good ones.
TideisTurning (PSW)	I love the idea of checking in with yourself around where you're at mentally before engaging @Captain24 !
Snowie	No need to be sorry @Captain24 I rarely get triggered but just have to be mindful just in case.
TideisTurning (PSW)	@Captain24 I'm curious- what might that mental pre check in look like?
Amber22 (PSW)	Onto our next question... Q7: What are some ways we could consciously create more positive or helpful social media engagement for ourselves?
Captain24	I think if Im in a really negative headspace it's probably best to stay away @TideisTurning (PSW) . If I'm feeling ok about myself then I can handle seeing the good stuff people post
Shaz51	I think having boundaries for ourselves on social media
Captain24	I'm not really sure. I think putting in boundaries but I'm not sure how
Jacques	Q6 how i understand most major social media platforms the algorithms they use are self learning so the more positive things you seek out the more it will target positive posts to you, so that is what i do, my partner and i share positive posts and as we do we get more of the same things we seek.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Boundaries are tough @Captain24 . I wonder if it might be about starting small?
Snowie	Especially on facebook, I think I have to be very mindful of what I post or comment on. Once I press 'enter' it is out there forever. Words have a lot of power. Especially on platforms that have little or no guidelines to them. That is why I like Sane. There are guidelines to follow to protect everyone.
ziggyhee	there are some really helpful facebook groups there we can participate
Amber22 (PSW)	It can be a bit scary without guidelines - I'm glad you feel better posting on Sane @Snowie
ziggyhee	it can be more helpful to follow those groups and updates of our 'friends'

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ziggyhee	i in fact unfollow majority of my friends, unless i know they would be helpful for me
Snowie	@ziggyhee me too
Captain24	I'm not sure where to start @TideisTurning (PSW) Maybe just limiting the time I spend scrolling through.
ziggyhee	otherwise it is depressing and daunting to see all those fancy things happening in others' lives
Shaz51	Having the quality of friends then having quantity of people on you Facebook page
TideisTurning (PSW)	Excellent point about guidelines @Snowie . I was taught posting online can be like putting it on a billboard. If you wouldn't want it on a billboard, maybe don't put it online?
TideisTurning (PSW)	Love this @Shaz51 !
ziggyhee	@Shaz51 exactly. like only about 10-15 people would like my posts, and they genuinely care about me.
Snowie	@Shaz51 couldn't agree more. I think some people just make it into a competition to see how many friends they can get
Jacques	Q7 be selective on who you friend on them, i only allow people i know to be a friend on social media, family for me. and any comments and interactions try to be respectful and helpful.
TideisTurning (PSW)	I feel like you're off to a good start with your pre engagement mental check ins @Captain24 . That limiting time could be another great idea!
TideisTurning (PSW)	I think a big part of it is carefully curating a 'feed' that feels well-balanced and doesn't have too many comparison triggers. One other thing I have considered is my own contributions, such as the rare occasion I might post something and trying to intentionally ensure a balance of posts-my highlights, but also the low-lights/ bloopers. I feel like for me, it might help reinforce there are highlights and low-lights. I also find it super helpful to follow others who do this

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	<p>Here are some further resources we recommend having a look at:</p> <p>1: Creating a Healthier Relationship with Social Media: https://www.healthline.com/health/social-media-and-mental-health</p> <p>2: Social media and mental health: https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/social-media-and-mental-health.htm</p> <p>3: 'The Happy Newspaper': An Instagram account with a possible subscription service for happier news stories: https://www.instagram.com/thehappynewspaper/?hl=en</p>
Amber22 (PSW)	
Shaz51	If I had no Facebook, I would have no interaction in irl at all
Jacques	me too @Shaz51 online is all i have, it is my only social interaction.
Captain24	Same @Shaz51 . It makes me feel so alone recognising it
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	I think I like the forums interaction I have. I don't know if I want to have 'friends' in real life...lol.
Shaz51	@Jacques , @Captain24 , that is why sane forum feels more real and caring than other social media
TideisTurning (PSW)	It can certainly be a confronting kind of a realisation to sit with @Captain24 @Shaz51 @Jacques IRL can be a real challenge
Amber22 (PSW)	So glad to hear that the forums is a nice safe space for so many tonight :)
Captain24	I'd be lost with out SANE @tyme (PSW/ Moderator) @Shaz51
Amber22 (PSW)	Q: Have you learned anything helpful from others' experiences here tonight that you might be able to apply in your own life? If yes, what did you learn?
Jacques	i feel the same @tyme (PSW/ Moderator) i have been hurt over and over by IRL friends, i have never been hurt on sane, i feel so welcome and accepted here. i feel im better off alone than to have IRL friends.
Shaz51	Totally agree my @tyme (PSW/ Moderator)

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Snowie	I learnt that I am not the only one with no friends irl. That we all find Sane helpful!!
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	This is our Forums Family :)
Jacques	yes i have learned we all have the same fears and hopes on social media, we all want a connection and some of us it can be more isolating. it can be a life saver too.
tyme (PSW/ Moderator)	And anyone here is welcome to join the forums family at saneforums.org
TideisTurning (PSW)	I learnt Sane Forums counts as social media!
Amber22 (PSW)	I learnt that boundaries are really important with social media, and that connection is a really good part of social media (including our forums!)
Captain24	I realise that I'm not the only one that struggles with social media. Also the we are all appreciative of SANE. I have also learnt from myself that Facebook is limiting me with my MH and scrolling is isolating me further and further from real life.
Shaz51	I have learnt that I am not alone and I have wonderful friends on Sane forum
Jacques	always @Shaz51 sane is my family too. :)
TideisTurning (PSW)	So, to engage or not engage? That is the question...
Jacques	retorical question @TideisTurning (PSW) ;)
Amber22 (PSW)	<p>Thank you for joining, and we hope you enjoyed the discussion. You are more than welcome to continue the discussion over on the SANE Forums if you would like:</p> <p>https://saneforums.org/t5/Social-Spaces/Peer-Group-Chat-Social-Media-To-Engage-Or-Not-To-Engage-Thursday/m-p/1344622#M348575</p> <p>Keep an eye out for the next Peer Group Chat discussion about Social Media- To Engage, Or Not To Engage? If you'd like to be informed about future Peer Group Chats, you can sign up to our mailing list</p>

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	here https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat You can also ask questions for us to discuss in future peer chats!
Captain24	Thank you and good night
Amber22 (PSW)	Next weeks Peer Group Chat is actually celebrating our wins :)
ziggyhee	thank you and good night to everyone
Shaz51	Limited engagement @TideisTurning (PSW)
Snowie	Thanks for the chat tonight. It has been a really good topic. Time for bed!
Jacques	hugs to everyone here, thank you for the wonderful evening chat @Amber22 (PSW) @TideisTurning (PSW) @tyme (PSW/ Moderator) once again some great food for thought. good night everyone.
Amber22 (PSW)	Thank you for coming along everyone :) Have a lovely night!
TideisTurning (PSW)	Thanks for your contributions tonight everyone. Until next time, take care!