

# Check your privacy settings

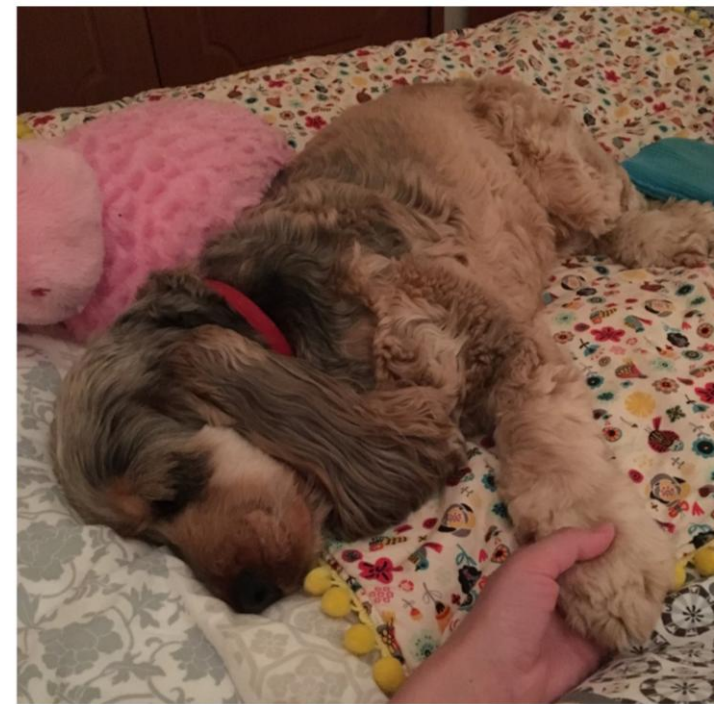
Should a child's illness journey be shared on social media?

Elise Burn  
Queensland Children's Hospital

November 2025



warriorluna



10.328 views

warriorluna Home from the hospital. #warrior

[View all 328 comments](#)

5 DAYS AGO



Queensland  
Government

# Children and Social Media

- Many children today have a presence on social media before they are born
- There are approximately 1500 images of a child shared online prior to their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday
- In 2020 the top income earner on YouTube (according to *Forbes* magazine) was a 9-year-old toy reviewer



PRIVACY

CONFIDENTIALITY

Children with  
chronic illness  
and/or disability  
on social media

INFORMED  
CONSENT



**Article 7** Children have the right to a legally registered name and nationality. Children also have the right to know their parents and, as far as possible, to be cared for by them.

**Article 8** Governments should respect a child's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

United Nations  
Convention on the  
Rights of the Child  
1989

1989 was also the year that  
the internet was first  
available to the public in  
Australia

**Article 16** Children have the right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their family and their home.

# The Right to an Open Future

- **A-C-Rights** – common to adults and children
- **A-Rights** – adult rights
- **C-Rights** – rights of dependency
- **Rights in trust** – subclass of **C-Rights**

*Every child has a right to an open future*





# To share...

- Connectedness
- Communication
- Raising awareness
- Information
- Community
- Income
- Popularity
- Entertainment



# ...or not to share?



- Privacy
- Confidentiality
- Consent
- Control
- Identity
- Open future
- Going viral
- Harm

Has the influence of social media changed the way you think about your work or the way you care for sick children?





"It is the one work that has brought me over the years more toe-curling, fist-clenching, lip-biting embarrassment than any other." ~Christopher Robin Milne

"I would be mortified if my parents shared my condition at length (and publicly) as a child or an adult." ~Carly Findlay

## What do we know now?

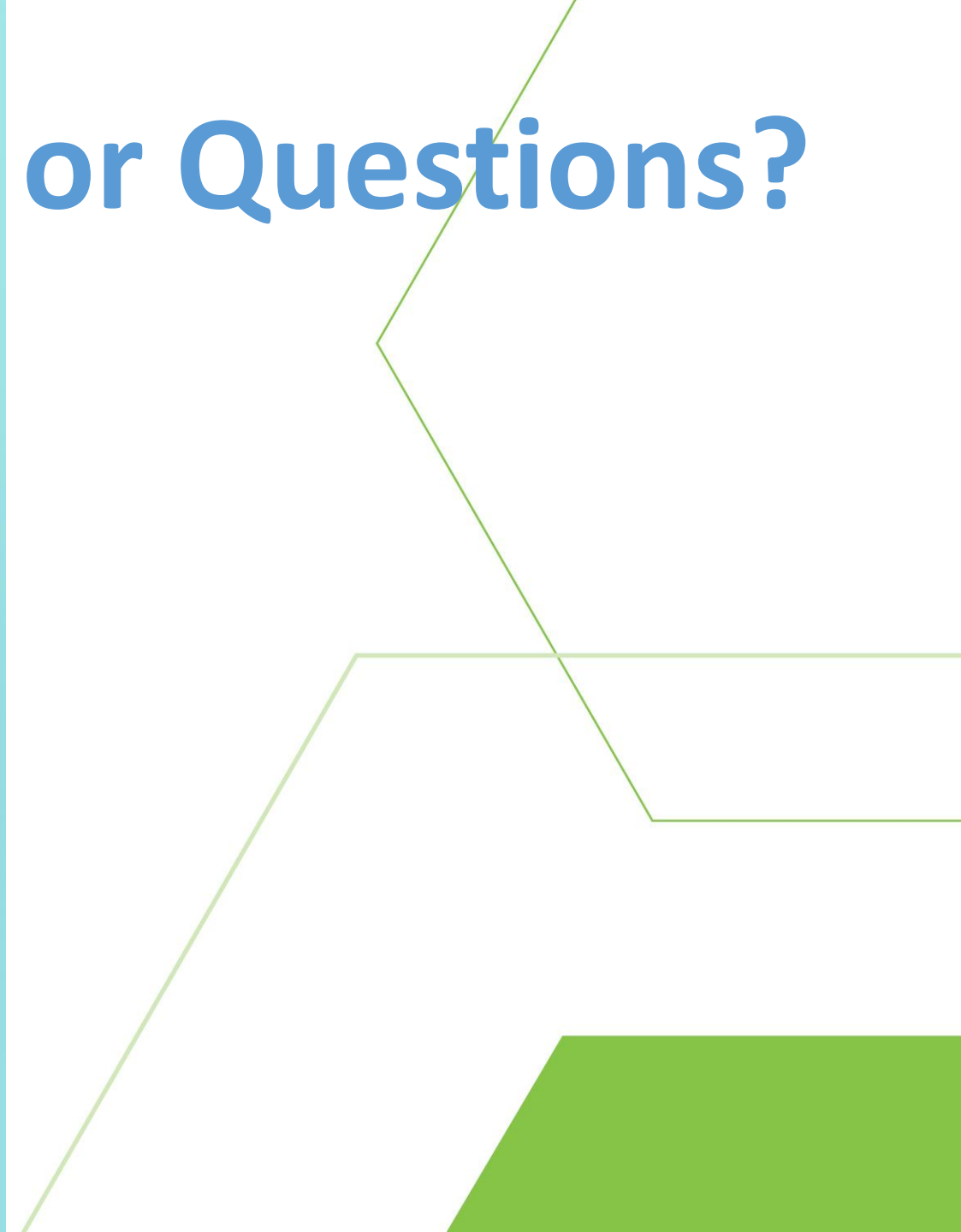
"We're not here for your inspiration." ~Stella Young

"It was a well intentioned act that can go very wrong like it did for me until I took control of my choices." ~Quentin Kenihan

# Future Questions

- Do healthcare workers have a right to access a child's illness social media account as part of our health assessment?
- Do we have a responsibility to consider the implications of social media presence in childhood and educate parents?
- How can we gain the child's perspective on social media when their capacity is limited by illness or disability?

# Comments or Questions?



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