

Social Media and the Minds of our Children



Our Goal for Today

Understand how our children's brains are vulnerable to social media

Understand both the positive and negative impacts of Social Media for our children

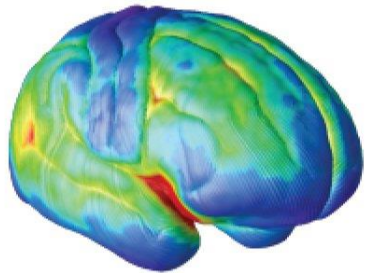
Increase parent awareness regarding potential dangers

Learn how to balance healthy engagement online with real life

Understand the signs of a child struggling with social media

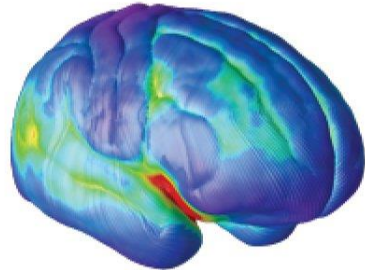
Provide tools for parents to get help if needed

Why teens are particularly vulnerable



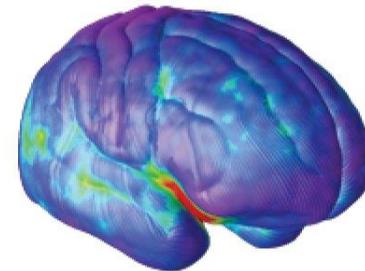
Age 12

During adolescence, the brain goes through a lot of changes. Gray matter diminishes as connections between neurons are cut back.



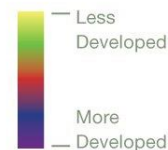
Age 16

Because the brain is still developing, it is more sensitive to the effects of drugs.



Age 20

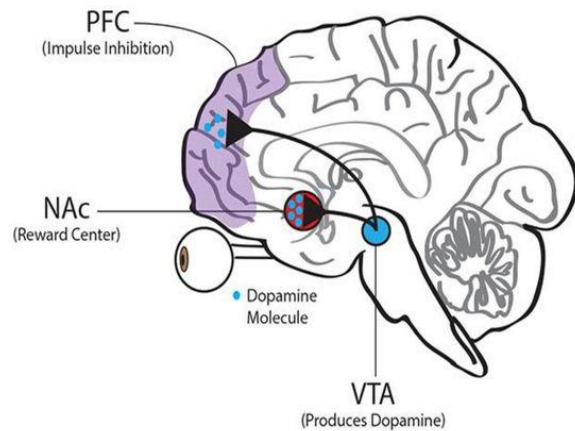
By adulthood, the changes caused by beginning drug use are less likely to “stick” and become hardwired as addiction.



- Brains are undergoing major growth and development
- Social Skills rapidly developing – seeking connection
- Reward center - Constant seeking of gratification
- Immediate gratification overstimulation - can increase risk of obsessive compulsive and addictive disorders

Dopamine driven addiction

Reward Center



Most of the activity in a teen brain is in the reward center:

- Pleasure
- Risk
- Reward
- Dopamine System

- Control center of brain not fully developed until 25 years
- Reward center is in hyperdrive - Dopamine = craving and reward
- ‘Gains in reputation’ - Likes, Comments and shares all trigger a dopamine release
- Dopamine receptors over time need more stimulation to get the same effect

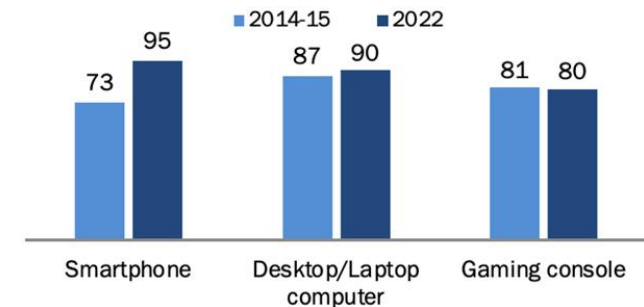
When they are most at risk, we give them.....



- Likes
- Comments
- Notifications
- Messages

Nearly all teens in 2022 have access to a smartphone, up from 73% in 2014-15

% of U.S. teens who say they have access to the following devices



Note: Teens refer to those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown. The 2022 question wording further clarified access at home.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.
"Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022"

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Data Trends

Median age for first time use of a mobile device is 12 months

15% of teens report having sent a sext, and 27% report having received one

Non-school related screen time among teenagers doubled from pre-pandemic estimates of 3.8 hours per day up to 7.7 hours

Social media is changing how comfortable teens are with sharing personal information

54% of teens say it would be hard to give up social media

46% of teens report being online almost constantly

Social Media and Self Doubt



Perfect Storm of Self Doubt

- Vulnerability
- Need for Validation
- Comparing need to compare to others

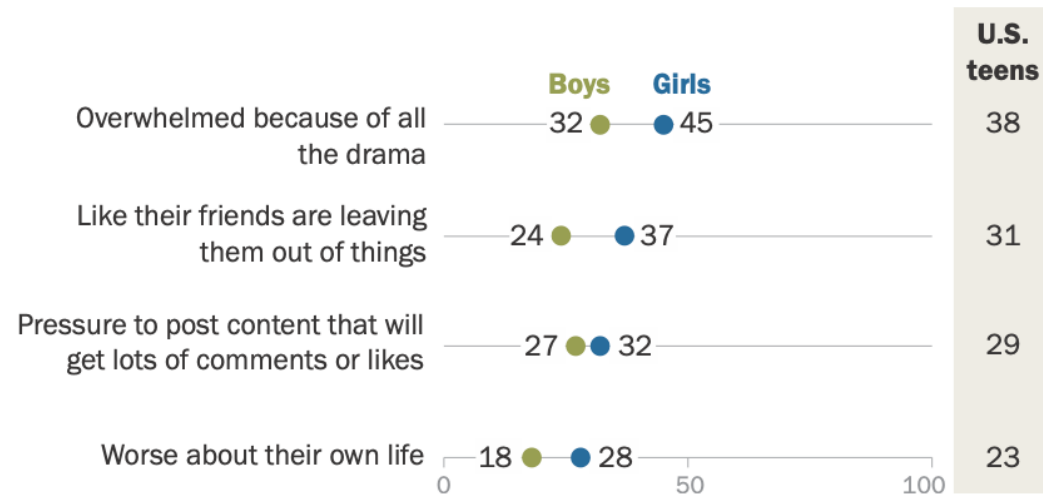
- Impossible Standards
- Curated lives that do not reflect reality
- Best and most enviable moments shared
- Struggles and ordinary things omitted

Social Challenges – Increased Anxiety

- Overwhelmed (38%)
- Pressure to post (29%)
- Feeling left out (31%)
- Feeling worse about their own life (23%)

Teen girls more likely than teen boys to say social media has made them feel overwhelmed by drama, excluded by friends or worse about their life

*% of U.S. teens who say that in general, what they see on social media makes them feel **a lot or little** ...*



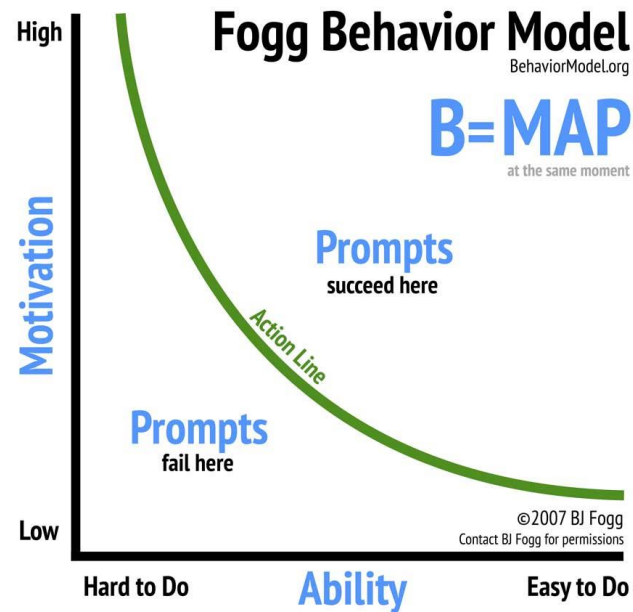
Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

“Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022”

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Designed to read your mind and pull you in



<https://behaviormodel.org>

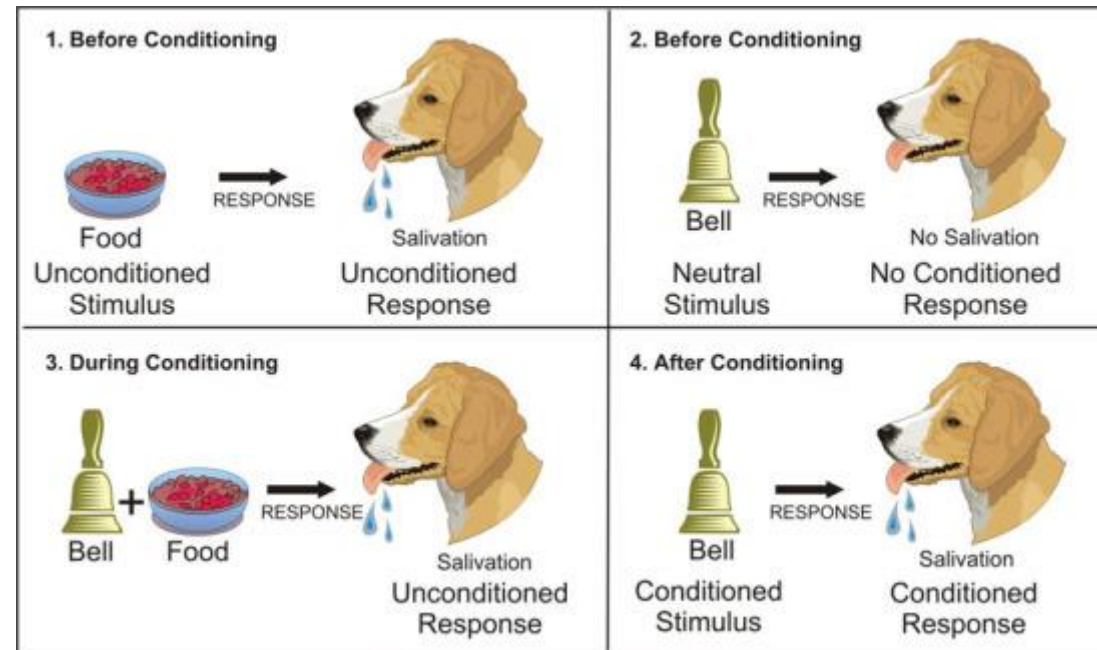
Behavior Loop

- Motivation (Engage you in activity – creates your buy in)
- Action (Have you interact with it – like button)
- Prompts (Trigger – alarm, vibration to pull you in)



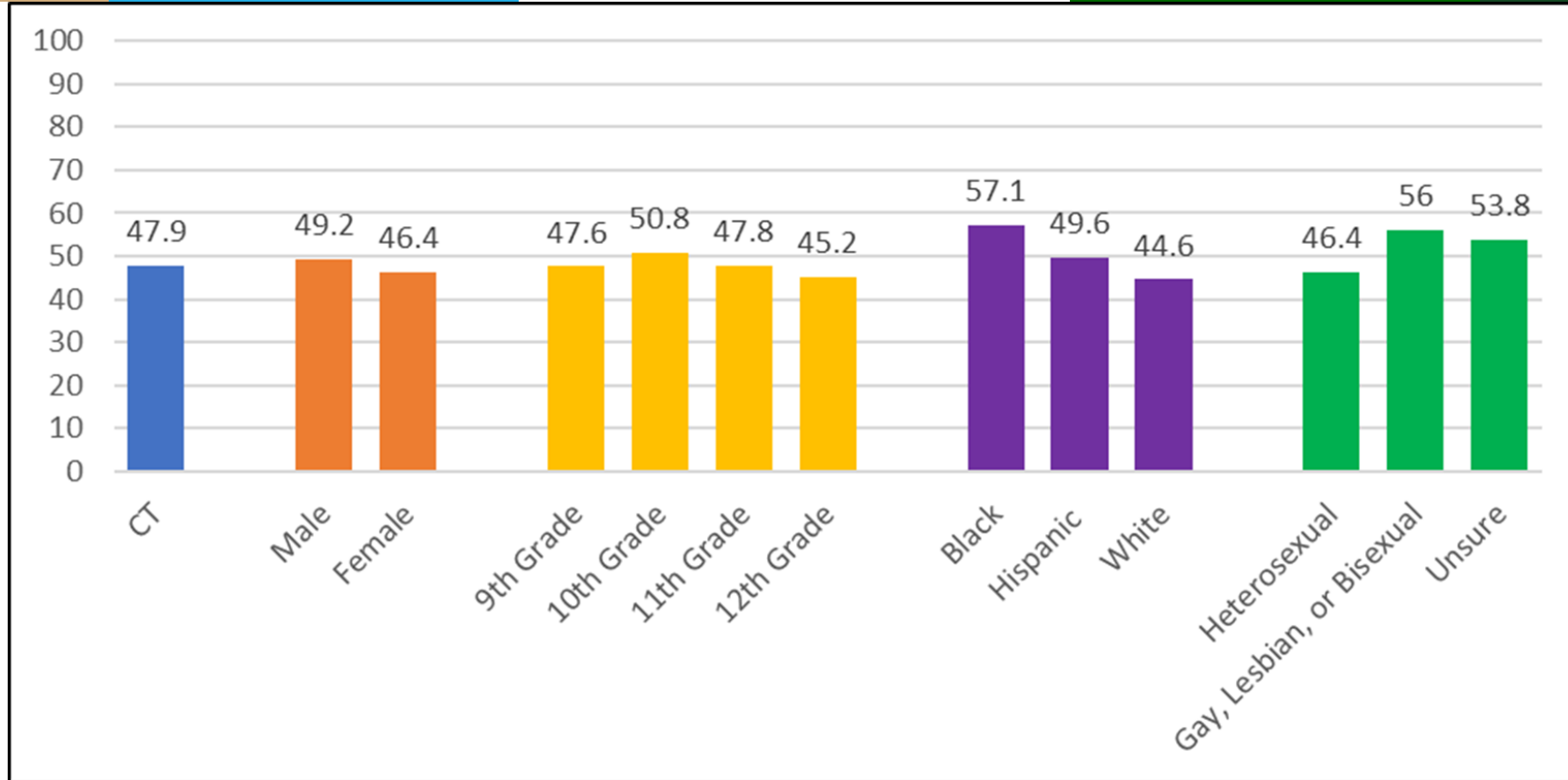
Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

We have all become conditioned by technology



Classical Conditioning

Percent of High School Students With At Least 3 Hours of Screen Time per Night - Connecticut



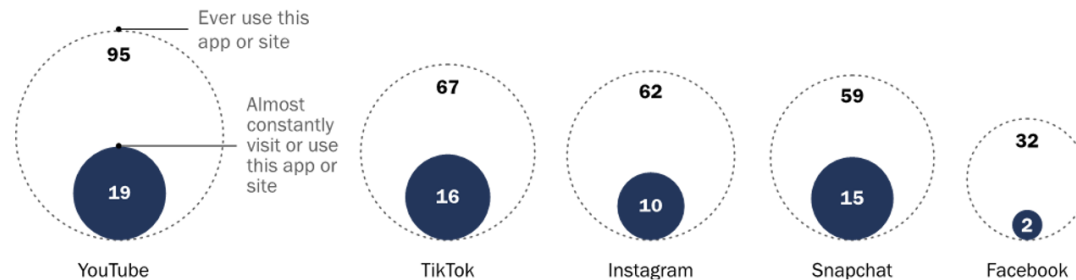
Source: Connecticut School Health Survey, 2019

Long term impacts

Addictive quality of Social Media

About one-in-five teens visit or use YouTube 'almost constantly'

% of U.S. teens who say they ...



Note: Teens refer to those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022"

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Sleepless Teens = Increased risk factors



Potential Dangers

Bullying

Dark Web

Cat fishing

Exploitation

Pornography

Online Bullying

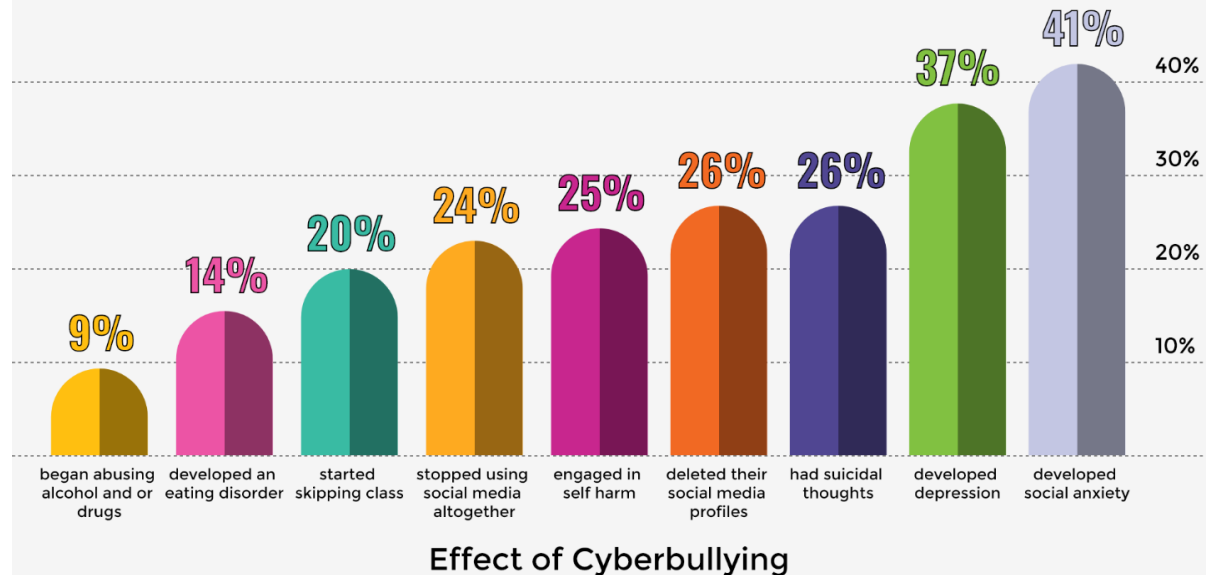
Self reported use is unreliable and kids wont report accessing sites they shouldn't be on

Self reported bullying statistics are not accurate as kids are bullied on sites they shouldn't be on or are bullied for actions they are embarrassed to admit to – so they do not report

Normal tween curiosity takes on serious level of risk due to ease of access and 24/7 nature of problem

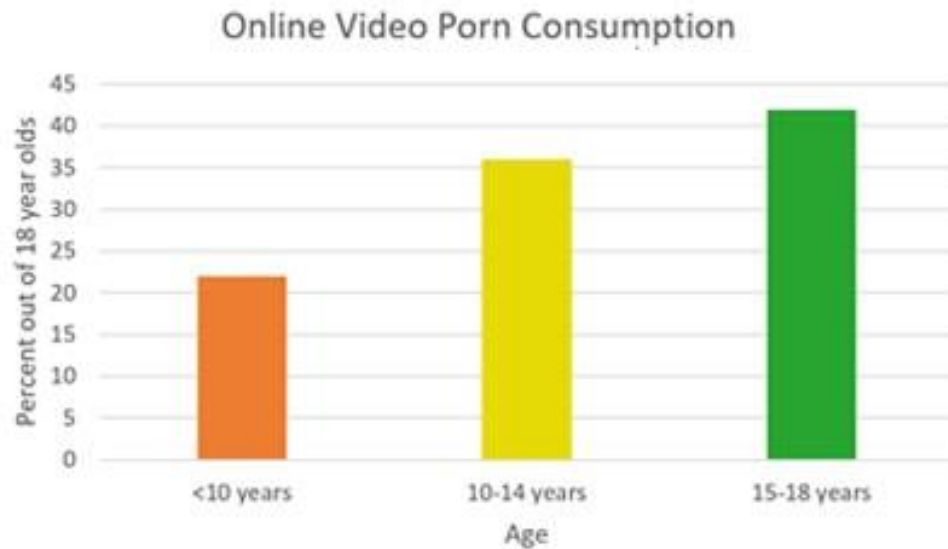
Online gaming is often the portal of entry to cyber bullying and pornography

Issues Kids Feel Result From Cyberbullying



<https://www.broadbandsearch.net/blog/cyber-bullying-statistics>

Online Pornography



Source: NPCC ChildLine, 2015

- Neuroplasticity
- Brain synapses are constantly stimulated
- Pleasure center in brain releases ‘feel good’ chemicals – so more is craved
- Changes a teens perception of normal sexual behavior
- Children under 10 now account for 22% of online porn consumption under 18 -years old
- The under 10 age group is now accounting for one in 10 visitors to porn video sites, per Bitdefender.
- Porn searches increase 4,700% after school (Google Analytics)

It's all about HOW you use it!



Studies have shown social media can be connecting, comforting and supportive when used to connect with those you care about

Can isolate us through voyeurism and identity construction associated with social comparison and reputational enhancement

Positive Effects of Social Media

Feeling more connected (80%)

Support Network (71%)

Creativity (71%)

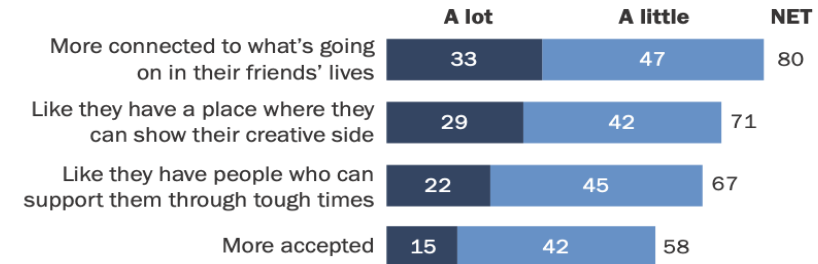
Finding their voice

Showing kindness and empathy

Feeling accepted

Majorities of teens say social media provides them with a space for connection, creativity and support ...

% of U.S. teens who say that in general, what they see on social media makes them feel ...

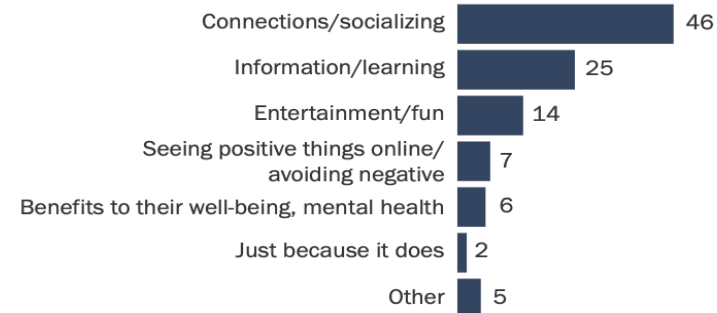


... and are more likely to say these sites have had a positive rather than negative impact on them, with many citing friendships, connections as reasons why

% of U.S. teens who say social media has had a ___ effect on them, personally



Among those who say mostly positive, % who give each of the following as the main reasons why



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Verbatim responses have been coded into categories. The 13% who received this question but did not give an answer are not shown. Including this group, figures may add up to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed. Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022. "Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



Prevention



Develop good coping mechanisms for stress that are not online (sport, art, animals, cooking, meditation)

Manage screen time

Set healthy boundaries together

Promote IN PERSON friendships, support as the primary connection

Have open and honest dialogue about risks

Screens in common areas and checked in at night

Practice what you preach!

Model healthy behaviors

Intervention – Signs to Look For

Distracted by Social Media all the time

Unable to focus or leave device behind

Severe anxiety/moodiness when separated from device

Constantly comparing themselves to others

Online image is very different from their real life one

Secrecy/withdrawal from family or friends

Grades drop

Noticeable weight gain/loss

Postvention



- Educate your kids about the 'whys' behind symptoms of overuse of Social Media
- Have open nonjudgmental discussions – prepare NOT to react
- Restrict or remove devices
- Use monitoring apps to track web/app movement
- Monitor their followers – change up the groups/people they follow
- Talk to a mental health provider – provide support and encouragement
- Contact school/authorities if concerned