

Social Media and Mental Health


Social media is everywhere today, and is a big part in young people’s lives. It is still very new, and we are still learning how it affects our mental health.

Almost Everyone is on Social Media.

Most teenagers use social media. In the United States, 95 out of 100 teens have access to a smartphone and feel they are almost always online.

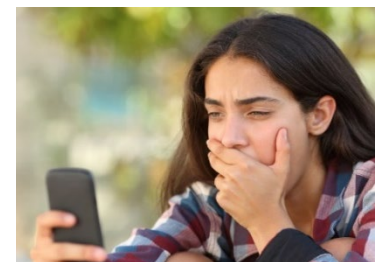


There are some good things from being able to connect with others online and there are some things that can be hurtful.

Helpful Things	Hurtful Things
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring Who You Are: Helpful to find out who you are and learn from others like you. • Connection: Making new friends online can help you not feel lonely. • Learning new things: You can find new hobbies, interests, tutorials, or books. • Taking Action: Connect with others to help make a difference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FOMO (Fear of Missing Out): Keeping up with what others are doing can lead to feeling left out. • Comparing: It is easy to compare your body or social life to others. Many people edit their pictures and only show what they want people to see. You may judge how many likes or comments you get compared to others. • Cyberbullying and Harassment: It is easier for someone to be mean when they hide behind a computer or a text and cannot be seen. This can lead to bullying. • Too Much Information: Looking at news may make you feel depressed. With so much information, it is hard to know what to trust. • Unsafe people: The person you are talking to may not be who they say they are. People can use fake profiles. They can be lying about who they are or why they want to talk with you.

There are benefits to social media. At the same time, it is important to not overdo it.

Likes and comments on social media can trick your brain. It makes your brain feel like it has a reward and makes you want to use social media more.



Social Media and Mental Health

What Unhealthy Social Media Use Looks Like

Unhealthy use may look like:

- Checking social media as soon as you wake up
- Mindless scrolling for longer than you planned
- Always posting photos of everything you do
- Always checking for online likes and comments
- Scrolling when spending time in-person with others.
- Comparing yourself to others based on what they share.



Tips For a More Healthy Use of Social Media

- Use social media less.
- Unfollow or mute people with content you do not want to see.
- Limit how many news sources you follow
- Work on your mindset (how you think).

It can be hard to use social media in a healthy way.

You can take a break from it whenever you need.

This does not make the problems with social media go away.



If You or Someone You Know Needs Help

If you are having trouble pulling away from social media or find it always makes you feel bad about yourself, there are resources that can help. Go to www.mhascreening.org.

You can take a survey and answer a few questions to see if you may be dealing with symptoms of a mental health condition.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, there is help.

- Call 988
- Chat at www.988lifeline.org
- You can also reach the Crisis Text Line by texting MHA to 741741.



Adapted from Mental Health America