Youth, Social Media, and Suicide

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What we will cover

- Basics of social media
- Does it impact the mental health of young people?
- Can it be a useful tool?
Social Media: when it became part of our lives

•Began in 1997 with Six Degrees and AOL messenger and chat rooms
•By 2000 the internet had 100 million users
•2003 MySpace – social media upswing
•2004 Facebook starts
•2005 Youtube
•2006 Twitter
•2010 Pinterest
•2010 Instagram
•2011 Snapchat
How Youth are communicating

• In 2012, about half of all teens still said their favorite way to communicate with friends was in person; today, less than a third say so.

• Not Facebook – only 15% of teens say it is their main site.

• Instagram and Snapchat are currently the most popular but it is constantly changing.
Social Media has its own language

• Hashtags #MeToo
• “Likes”

• Do you know what these acronyms mean?
  • YOLO
  • F2F
  • FOMO
  • NSFW
  • 9 / 99
  • GNOC
  • WTTP
Apps we should know about

14 Apps Parents Should Know About

**Bumble** is similar to the popular app “Tinder,” however, it requires women to make the first contact. Kids have been known to use Bumble to create fake accounts and falsify their age.

**KIK** allows anyone to contact and direct messages to your child. Kids can bypass traditional text messaging features. KIK gives users unserialized access to anyone, anywhere, anytime.

**HOLLA** is a self-proclaimed “addicting” video chat app that allows users to meet people all over the world in seconds. Reviewers say they have been confronted with racial slurs, explicit content, and more.

**ASKFM** is known for cyber bullying. The app encourages users to allow anonymous people to ask them questions.

**HOT OR NOT** encourages users to rate your profile, check out people in their area, and chat with strangers. The goal of this app is to hook up.

**INSTAGRAM** allows sharing pictures, but many kids are now creating fake accounts to hide content from parents. Kids also like to text using Instagram because messages are deleted once a user leaves the conversation.

**BURNBOOK** allows a user to post anonymous rumors about people through audio messages, texts, and photos.

**SNAPCHAT** is a popular app that promises users they can take a photo/video and it will disappear. Recent features include “Stories” which allows users to view content for up to 24 hours. Snapchat also allows users to see your location.

**LIVEME** is a live-streaming video app that uses geolocation to share videos so users can find out a broadcaster’s exact location. Users can earn “coins” as a way to “pay” minors for photos.

**WHISPER** is an anonymous social network that promotes sharing secrets with strangers. It also reveals a user’s location so people can meet up.

**CALCULATOR** is only one of several secret apps used to hide photos, videos, files, and browser history.

**OMEGLE** is a free online chat website that promotes chatting anonymously with strangers.

**Yubo**, formerly known as YELLOW, is an app designed to allow teens to flirt with each other in a Tinder-like atmosphere.

**WISHBONE** is an app that allows users to compare kids against each other and rate them on a scale.
Teens Online

- Teens spend an average of 9 hours a week on social media
- “iGen” kids born between 1995-2012
- One survey showed 13 year olds check social media up to 100 times per day.
  - Why?
    - 61% of teens said they wanted to see if their online posts are getting likes and comments
    - 36% of teens said they wanted to see if their friends are doing things without them.
    - 21% of teens said they wanted to make sure no one was saying mean things about them.
Does social media impact mental health?

**The Smartphone Generation: A Statistical Portrait**

The constant presence of the internet, particularly social media, is changing the behavior and attitudes of today's teens.

**Not Hanging Out With Friends**

Times per week teenagers go out without their parents

2007 – iPhone released

2.0

2.1

2.2

2.3

2.4

2.5

2.6

2.7

2.8

2.9


- 12th-graders
- 10th-graders
- 8th-graders

**Less Likely to Get Enough Sleep**

Percentage of 8th-, 10th-, and 12th-graders who get less than seven hours of sleep most nights

2007 – iPhone released


45%

40%

35%

30%

25%
Social Media and the Teen Brain

• In a recent study, researchers at the UCLA brain mapping center used an fMRI scanner to image the brains of 32 teenagers as they used a bespoke social media app resembling Instagram. By watching the activity inside different regions of the brain as the teens used the app, the team found certain regions became activated by "likes", with the brain's reward center becoming especially active.

• It is similar to how the brain reacts when we see someone we love or win money.
Impact of Social Media

- Nearly 2/3 say they often or sometimes come across racist, sexist, homophobic or religious-based hate content in social media.
- 1 in 4 teens say social media is “extremely” or “very” important to them for expressing themselves creatively.

- A survey of more than 1,000 18- to 24-year-olds across America discovered a total of 41% are made to feel anxious, sad, or depressed by platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. Yet 77% say having these accounts provides more benefits than drawbacks.2
Impact continued

• Of Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube — Instagram was found to be the most detrimental to a young person's mental health (esp. for young women).

• Only Youtube got a positive rating, but it wasn't by much; the toll the streaming video platform takes on sleep, body image, bullying, and fear of missing out (FOMO) offset positive results like community-building and self-expression.

• 8th graders who are heavy users of social media increase their risk of depression by 27% BUT those kids who played sports, went to religious services or even did homework more than the average kid cut their risk significantly

• “Social Media Anxiety Disorder.” (SMAD)
Youth say it’s positive and negative!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Positive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22% say social media has made them feel like they were missing out</td>
<td>71% say social media has a positive impact on friendships</td>
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<td>29% say social media has hurt their self-esteem or made them feel insecure</td>
<td>61% say social media has a positive impact on self-confidence</td>
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<td>72% say people their age are too distracted by social media</td>
<td>66% say social media makes it easier to connect with people</td>
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Teen Self Reported Happiness
Hyper-Connection and Loneliness

• Because kids are constantly updating what they are watching, wearing, playing and who they are with they can feel hyper-connected.

• On the flip side this can easily make kids feel left out, ignored, lonely. Pressure to live up to a certain image.

• 12th graders in 2015 were going out (without their parents) less often than 8th graders did in 2009

"The kinds of challenges that I experienced in high school along with my peers are now 24/7 issues because of technology, computers, cellphones, and social media," Shane Feldman, an undercover student who graduated from high school in 2012, told Business Insider. "There's no real escape."
Kids and Suicide

• the number of children and adolescents (ages 5-17) admitted to children's hospitals for thoughts of suicide or self-harm more than doubled over the period 2008-2015.

• 100% of 3rd graders in a study had seen a suicide on tv

• 29% of kids disclosed their intent to another person

• Suicide rate for teen girls hit a 40 year high in 2015

• Study looking at suicide deaths in children 14 and under found that
  • Most were male (76%)
  • Most died at home
  • ADD/ADHD most common diagnosis of these children and other disruptive disorders (not mood disorders)
  • 80% used hanging as their method
Suicide and social media

• Teens who spend 3 hours a day or more on electronic devices are 35% more likely to have a risk factor for suicide, such as making a suicide plan (under 2 hours per day – risk is minimal no matter what they are looking at)

• According to recent research (Cerel, 2015) 147 people are exposed to suicide for each death and 6 people experience a major life disruption.

• Kids get more exposure to people in crisis online / via social media
Suicide Promotion Online – Momo/ Blue Whale

• 'Momo' is an internet game where the controller encourages youngsters to harm themselves after sending them violent messages via What’s App the messaging app. If they do not comply, they are apparently threatened.

• Momo started on Facebook and is connected with the death of a 12 yo in Argentina.

• Blue Whale – Online game that encouraged users to self-harm and to “win” the game the users take their own life.

• Connected with several deaths of young girls in Russia.
What Warning Signs of Suicide look like online

- Feeling alone, hopeless, or isolated
- Irritability (out of character)
- Impulsive Behaviors
- Insomnia posts
- Withdrawal from everyday activities
- Use of negative emoticons
- Concerning hashtags

"I can’t do anything!"
"I hate the world!"
"Another day not going to any class."

#depressed #alone
#hatemyslef
#cutting #givingup
continued

- Wanting to die
- Intense and urgent emotional despair
- Rage or seeking revenge
- Changing screen names/ deleting avatars/ leaving games
- Glorifying death
- Questions about where to access lethal means

“No one would care if I were gone.”
“I’m done.”
“I’ll show you all.”
“Death is beautiful”
Can the internet be used to help Kids Mental health?

History of Online Help

- Samaritans in the UK started responding to online requests in the year 2000

- The first national network of crisis centers providing online crisis support—suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat—a program of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline with more than 30 centers nationally providing services
Online help

- Social Media outlets begin implementation of suicide prevention plans in 2010 – having started the conversation in 2006

- Mdhelp4youth.org begins in 2011 with funds from Garrett Lee Smith and State of MD

- Google introduces NSPL number whenever suicide is typed in for search in April 2010 with others following quickly

- Dosomething.org begins national texting through the national crisis texting program in 2013

- Texting/online chat programs becoming part of the service delivery for crisis centers

- AAS/CONTACT USA accredit these services
You often get more information online

- **Disinhibition Effect:** The online disinhibition effect is the reduction or abandonments of social restrictions and inhibitions found in normal face-to-face communication when using remote electronic communications.
Meeting kids where they are

• According to a recent International Center for Media & the Public Affairs (ICMPA) study, "students around the world reported that being tethered to digital technology 24/7 is not just a habit, it is essential to the way they construct and manage their friendships and social lives."

• Reports of death by suicide increase on social media – Robin Williams – Simone Battle – forcing media outlets to have policies

• Logic song “1-800-273-8255” increases Lifeline traffic on all platforms
  • Video viewed more than 221 million times on YouTube
Possible Positive Aspects of Social Media

• Socialization (finding your group)
• Learning
• Helpful health and sexuality information
• Self expression and creativity
• Involvement in civic issues and causes

Many more…
Help kids manage their social media time

• Ask them to pay attention to:
  • How much time they spend on social media
  • How each session on social media made them feel.

• Encourage them to block someone or mute a thread if it makes them feel bad.

• Have them take a break to focus on something else (not online). Then see if they can do it for longer and longer (use a timer).
continued

* Prepare them for offensive content (racist etc...) and discuss how they will deal with it. (replying vs. blocking)

* Set times when phones and electronic devices need to be put away and turned off. i.e. dinner, bedtime, visiting relatives.
  - Consider shutting off wi-fi and taking devices to encourage sleep.
  - Make sure you model this behavior
In Clinical Practice

- Do you discuss your client’s life on social media?
- Consider having them bring in an iPad or phone to show you meaningful posts
- Ask how much time they spend on social media each day?
- Encourage them to “budget” their time. i.e. after 45 minutes take a break, walk the dog, eat something, then they can get back on.
- Do they have outlets to interact socially in person with other people?
Suicide Threats Online: What You Can Do

Monitor and address suicide-related posts
• Be vigilant for suicide myths or trending topics
• Address inaccurate posts
• Avoid reposting stories about suicide attempts/deaths
• Take Action!
  • Share your concern and be direct.
  • Mention specific concerning statements + behaviors.
  • Ask if the person wants to talk.
  • Offer to connect with mental health services.
Suicide Threats Online

• DO:
  • Learn the warning signs;
  • Take any warning signs seriously;
  • Ask directly if the person is suicidal;
  • Be a good listener;
  • Be non-judgmental
  • Take action
  • Offer hope that alternatives are available
  • Stay involved

• DON’T:
  • Act shocked
  • Taunt or dare them
  • Be sworn to secrecy
  • Avoid the discussion
  • Make empty promises
  • Offer false hope

You Need to Know:
• PLAN-
  • “when are you going to do it”
  • “where are you going to do it”
  • “how are you going to do it”
Crisis Text Line

• 741 741
• 24 million messages exchanged since August 2013
• Local text lines
Guidance for Schools

• Monitor, recognize, and respond to warning signs that students share on social media.

• Integrate social media into school’s suicide prevention plan:
  • Give students suicide prevention materials to post on social networking sites
  • Encourage students to share concerning information found on social media with trusted adults.
  • Encourage youth to “interrupt” a bullying message.

• Connect students to Reach Out, a suicide prevention web site that uses social media.
Guidance for Schools, cont.

In the aftermath of a suicide, schools should:

- **Monitor** social media sites and blogs
- **Respond** to misinformation, such as responding to comments, reinforce important information (e.g. connection between mental health and suicide), and offer resources

SAMSHA, Toolkit for Schools for Suicide Prevention
One parent’s idea

My new requirement is that if my kid wants to download a new app, she has to write a one page report on the founders, company story, and business model so that she understands how the app benefits from her use.

This is what happens when your mom works in tech.

9:14 PM - 3 Dec 2018

6,750 Retweets 34,935 Likes
Resources

- https://childmind.org/article/media-guidelines-for-kids-of-all-ages/
- http://www.stcguide.com/
- http://www.yourlifeyourvoice.org/Pages/Tips.aspx
- https://socialnetworking.procon.org/
- www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- www.crisischat.org
- www.Suicidology.org

- Mental Health First Aid www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org
- QPR www.qprinstitute.com
- ASIST https://www.livingworks.net/programs/asist/
- Kognito md.kognito.com