

Adolescent Social Media: Myths Managing Risks and Maximizing Benefits

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Your Own Social Media Use

- Do you use social media?
 - Platforms?
 - Frequency?



Would you Say Social Media is ...

- Very bad for your mental health?
- Somewhat bad?
- Neutral?
- Good?
- Very good?
- How would your answer change for adolescents?



Learning Objectives

1

Describe the association between adolescent social media use and adolescent well-being and mental health

2

Name several factors that influence the association between adolescent social media use and adolescent well-being

3

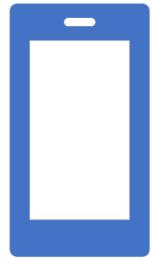
Identify and describe positive and beneficial effects of social media use for adolescents

4

Identify research based strategies and recommendations for safe(r) social media use in adolescents



Commonly Used Abbreviations



SMU = social media use



PSMU – problematic
social media use



MH = Mental Health



Social Media Definition

the means in interactions among people by creating, sharing, and/or exchanging ideas and information through online groups and networks.

(Tufts University, 2023).

How Frequently do Adolescents Use Social Media?

[Teens, Social Media and Technology 2023 | Pew Research Center](#)

95% of youth 13-17 use a social media platform

1/3 use it “almost constantly”

40% of children 8-12 use SM

What Platforms Do Adolescents Typically Use?

Ever use...

- Youtube (90%)
- Tiktok (63%)
- Snapchat (60%)
- Instagram (59%)

Daily Use

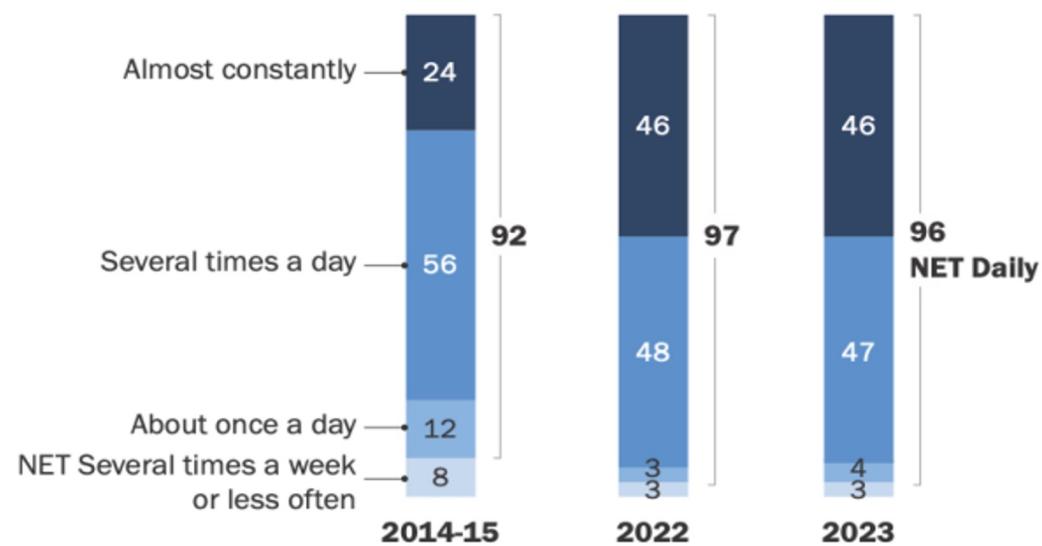
- Youtube (70%)
- Tiktok (58%)
- Snapchat (50%)
- Instagram (59%)

1/3 Report using at least one of these sites almost constantly

How Frequently are Adolescents online?

The share of teens who say they are online ‘almost constantly’ has roughly doubled since 2014-2015

% of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 who say they use the internet ...



Note: Figures may not add up to NET values due to rounding. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. teens conducted Sept. 26-Oct. 23, 2023.

“Teens, Social Media and Technology 2023”

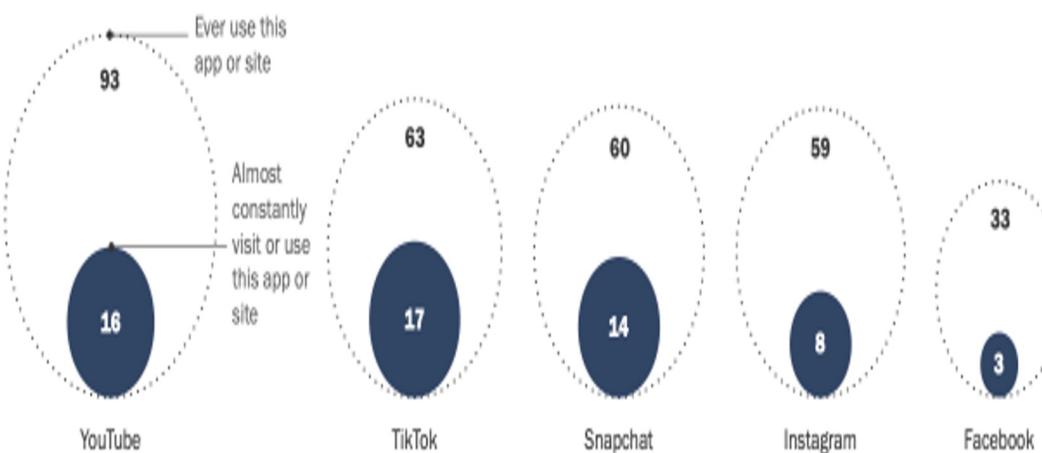
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

46% of teens are online “almost constantly” (roughly doubled since 2014/15)

How Frequently do Adolescents Use Social Media?

Nearly 1 in 5 teens say they're on YouTube, TikTok 'almost constantly'

% of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 who say they ...



Note: Those who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. teens conducted Sept. 26-Oct. 23, 2023.

"Teens, Social Media and Technology 2023"

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**17% are on
YouTube and TikTok
'almost constantly'**





Objective One:

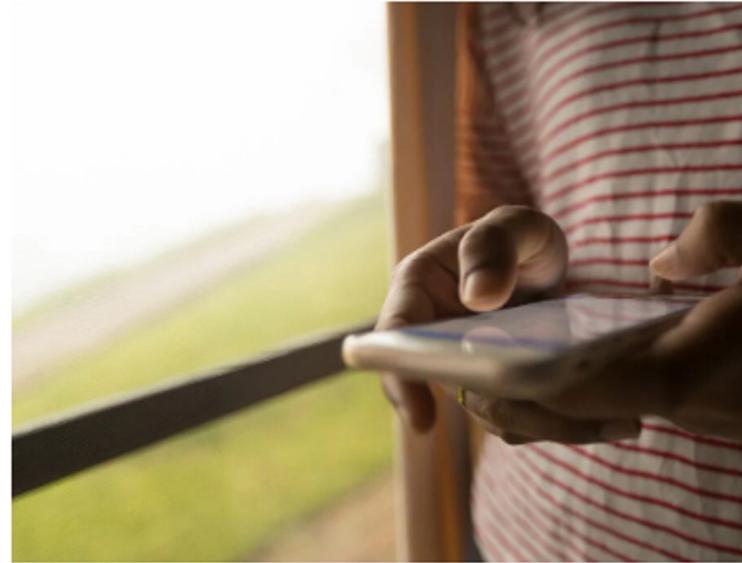
Describe the
Effects of Social
Media Use on
Adolescents

Media Paints a Bleak Picture

How social media's toxic content sends teens into 'a dangerous spiral'

October 8, 2021 – *Eating disorders expert Bryn Austin, professor in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, discusses the recent revelation that Facebook has long known that its Instagram app is harming teens' mental health.*

Q: Leaked documents from Facebook show that the company has known for at least two years that its Instagram app is making body image issues worse for teens, particularly girls. What's your reaction to this news?



News Stories on Instagram and Mental Health

EXPLORE 6 RELATED PAGES

1 [Social Media Effects on Teen Girls | IST 110: Introduction to ...](#)

With social media being so accessible to everyone these days it is easy to forget the effect it can have on teens, especially girls. Young girls these days ...

 sites.psu.edu



[Instagram's Positive Effects On Mental Health, Explained By ... - Bustle](#)

 www.bustle.com



[Why Instagram Might Be Toxic for Women's Mental Health | Vogue](#)

 www.vogue.com



[The Messy Truth About Teen Girls and Instagram - New York Times](#)

 www.nytimes.com

5 [The Effect of Social Media in Young Girls | HuffPost Teen](#)

Needless to say, I think that the best and most effective solution is to empower young girls to control the effect that social media and advertisements can ...

 www.huffpost.com



[Social Media Hurts Girls More Than Boys | Time](#)

 time.com

Recommended to you based on what's popular

Increase in Depression Symptoms Occurs After Adoption of Smartphone

- 2012 = Half of Americans use Smartphone
- 2015 = 92% of Teens and Young Adults Used one
- 2011-2012 is when increase in depression symptoms started

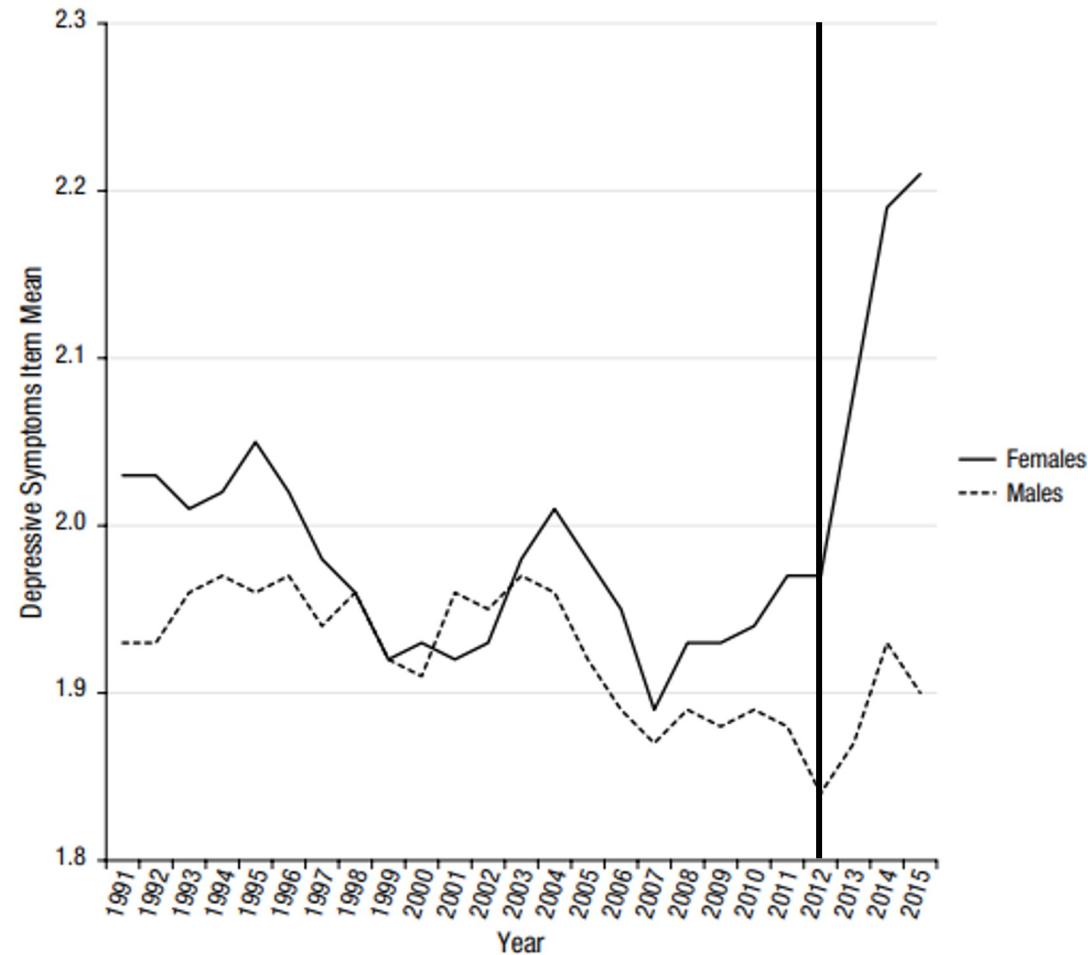


Fig. 1. Depressive symptoms (item mean), 8th, 10th, and 12th graders, by sex, MtF, 1991–2015.

Increase in Depression Symptoms Occurs After Adoption of Smartphone

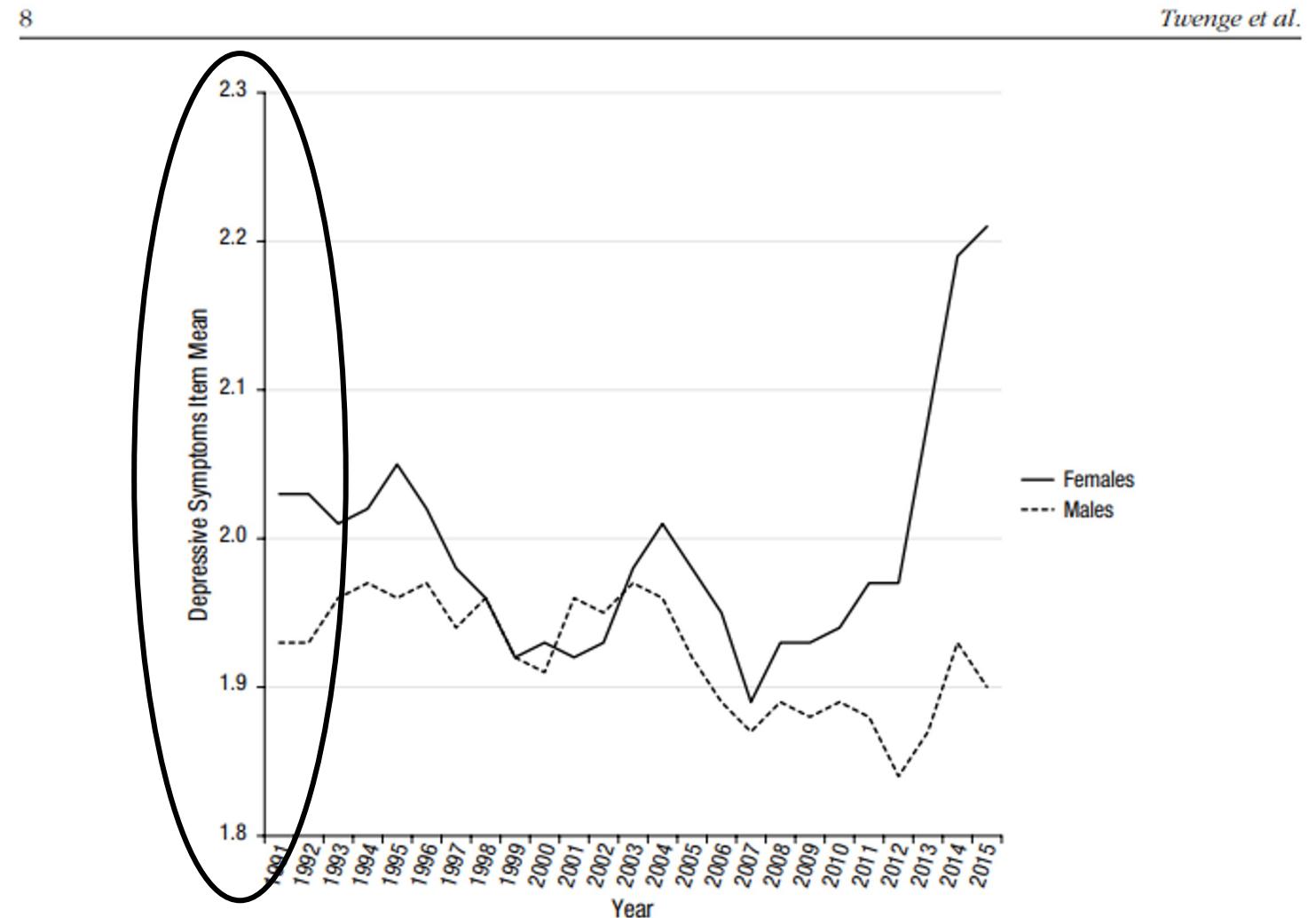


Fig. 1. Depressive symptoms (item mean), 8th, 10th, and 12th graders, by sex, MtF, 1991–2015.

Is that the whole story?

Table 2. Correlations Between Screen and Nonscreen Activities and Depressive Symptoms (8th and 10th Graders; MtF) and Suicide-Related Outcomes (9th–12th Graders; YRBSS), 2009–2015

	Bivariate <i>r</i>	Controlled for sex, race, SES, grade, and region	Controlled for sex, race, SES, grade, and region and in-person social interaction	Girls (controlled for race, SES, grade, and region)	Boys (controlled for race, SES, grade, and region)
MtF (correlations with depressive symptoms)					
Screen activities					
Social media use	.05*	.03*	.06*	.06*	.01
TV viewing	.04*	.02*	.03*	.02*	.02*
Internet news use	.00	.00	.01*	.01	-.02
Nonscreen activities					
In-person social interaction	-.07*	-.08*	-.09*	-.08*	-.09*
Religious services attendance	-.15*	-.14*	-.14*	-.16*	-.13*
Sports or exercise	-.22*	-.19*	-.18*	-.20*	-.19*
Homework hours	-.06*	-.05*	-.06*	-.06*	-.04*
Print media use	-.11*	-.10*	-.09*	-.12*	-.08*
Having a paid job	.00	.01	.02*	-.01	.02*
YRBSS (correlations with suicide-related outcomes)					
Screen activities					
Electronic device use	.12*	.13*	—	.14*	.12*
TV viewing	.03*	.02*	—	.02	.03*
Nonscreen activities					
Exercise	-.12*	-.08*	—	-.08*	-.08*



So....Is Social Media Use Harmful for Adolescents?

- What does harmful mean? List some possible harmful outcomes of social media use?

So....Is Social Media Use Harmful for Adolescents?

- What does harmful mean? List some possible harmful outcomes of social media use?
 - Depression?
 - Anxiety?
 - Well-being?
 - Body image?
 - Self-esteem?
 - Cyberbully/cyber attack?
 - Sleep?



Social Media and Well-Being

Umbrella Review overall small, weak and inconsistent association between SMU and mental health (Valkenberg, Meier & Beyens 2022)

Correlation between time on social media and depression could go both ways (Cunningham, Hudson & Harkness 2021)

- Time on Social media \square depression ($r=.11$) BUT
- Depression \square problematic SMU ($r=.29$)

Group Correlations Hide individual Differences

Small correlations across many adolescents
mask individuals who may be more susceptible

- 44% no effect, 46% better, 10% worse (Beyens et al., 2020)

Time use not as important as content and
intent to use

- Time use accounts for 6% of PSMU

10-15% adolescents experience PSMU

PSMU

- Enduring preoccupation with SM
- Inability to stop using
- Neglect for one's health or important life areas

Group Correlations Hide individual Differences

Social Media
Susceptibility differs
across adolescents

Those more at risk:

- Already have poor mental health
- Adolescent girls

Risks Extend Past Mental Health

Exposure to Harmful Content

- Depictions of self-harm
- Body image
- Extreme inappropriate content

Cyberbullying

Predatory behaviors from adults

Interferes with Sleep

Preliminary Takeaways:

The majority of adolescents use social media on a frequent basis

Many adolescents can use social media regularly without overwhelmingly negative effects

Time spent on social media is not a good indicator for problematic use

Objective Two:

Name several factors that influence the association between adolescent social media use and adolescent well being



Moving Beyond Frequency of Use

- Brainstorm with a peer possible other factors that may influence the association between Social Media use and adolescent well being?

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Not just how much they use, or if they post, but **WHY** they use and post

- Motivations to use

What are possible motivations adolescents have for SMU?

Active vs passive use?

- Passive social media use is linked to adolescent depression and anxiety (Thorisdottir et al., 2019)
- However - (Valenburg 2021)
 - Ecological Momentary Sampling – only confirmed for 20% of adolescents
 - Browsing-induced envy vs browsing induced enjoyment
- Positive, active social media use reduces online specific FoMO (Mao et al., 2023)

Motivations for Use:

Motivations for Social Media Use (MSMU)

- Connection
- Popularity
- Appearance
- Values and Interests

Social Media Use Motives

Surveillance

- gain information, learn

Network expansion

- befriend others express thoughts and feelings

Intrapersonal motive

- forget life, pass time

Relationship maintenance

- contact with family and friends

How do different intents to use social media influence SMU?

Romantic motivations for adolescent SMU are associated with online aggression perpetration & victimization (Young et al., 2017)

Entertainment, passing time, & communication motivations for adolescent SMU positively affected user satisfaction (Shao et al., 2023)

The motivation of SMU to alleviate boredom increases PSMU and anxiety in adolescents (Stockdale & Coyne, 2020)

How does motivation to use SM, affect PMSU?

Biggest predictor of PMSU was using SM to avoid negative affect - forget problems, pass time (Schivinksi et al., 2020)

Focus on enhancing popularity and image

Social comparison

Seeking out content related to body image (“thinspiration”)

Summarize Findings So Far

How would you
summarize the findings
so far?

Practice explaining to a
peer role of social media
and adolescent health

Objective Three:

Identify and describe positive and beneficial effects of social media use for adolescents



Is all SMU
harmful?

What are some
potential benefits of
social media use for
adolescents?

Possible Benefits of SMU

- Positive Community and Connection with Others with similar identity/ability/interests
- Online support from peers (esp. marginalized youth)
- Social Media helps youth feel
 - Accepted (58%)
 - Have people who support them (68%)
 - More connected to Friends in real life (80%)

(US. Surgeon General, 2023)

Possible Benefits of SMU

- Adolescents view social media as a meaningful way to connect with peers (Maheux et al., 2021)
- Transgender adolescents described receiving crucial social support from social media (Selkie et al., 2020)
- Adolescents who struggle with social anxiety benefit from SMU as it provides social engagement (Wier, 2023)



Recommendations for Youth

Based on what you've learned so far, what recommendations would you make for youth who use SM?

- Potential risks
- Reasons for use
- Potential benefits



Objective 4:

Recommendations
for SMU for Youths

Create Opportunities for Connection

Using SM for social support (reaching out to friends)

Healthy socialization

Encourage Youth to Follow good role models online

- What does your algorithm say about you? What would you like it to say?

Avoid Negative Parts of SM

1

Be mindful of exposure to harmful content

- Promotes self harm, eating disorders, misinformation, racism

2

Limit use focused on Social Comparison

- Focusing on photos, feedback on photos etc

3

Discuss accuracy of SM posts

- Photos manipulated or enhanced

Strategies Parents use for managing social media Use

Brainstorm with a peer
different strategies parents
might use to manage social
media

Which ones do you
think are most
helpful?

Parental Mediation: Types and Overview

Active Mediation

- Openly discuss social media use with adolescents
- Actively guide adolescents during social media use

Restrictive Mediation

- Restrict online activity using non-intrusive or intrusive methods
- Restrict the kind of content adolescents view or who they interact with online

Co-viewing

- Look at different media platforms simultaneously or with adolescents
- Difficult to co-view content on small personal devices

Which Mediation Strategy Works Best?

- Active Meditation is the most effective strategy
- Restrictive meditation can backfire
- Role of parenting styles

Parental Mediation: Types and Overview

- Positive Parenting and Clear Rules
- Monitoring and Open communication
- Avoid restrictive/reactive approaches
- Model responsible behavior
- Co-use and involvement

Recommendations for Parents

Create a Family Media Plan

- Agreed expectations for using technology
 - Rules, balancing screen/online time
 - Content boundaries
 - Not disclosing personal information

Facilitate and enhance in-person interactions

- Unplugged non-structured connections
- Phone free dinner

Model responsible behavior

American Association of Pediatricians SM Tips

Conclusion

Not all SMU is harmful

Many adolescents use it without negative effects

Type/Intent of Use is more important than frequency of use

Parent's play a role in managing social media



What are your Takeaways?

What stands out as most important or most interesting thing they learned?

What will you take away?

How will this affect how you parent, practice with teens, or what you do in their personal/professional life?

What questions do
you have?



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