



Psychological scientists examine potential beneficial and harmful effects of social media on adolescents' social, edu

Youth using social media should be encouraged to use functions that create opportunities for social support, online companionship, and emotional intimacy that can promote healthy socialization.

- Data suggest that youths' psychological development may benefit from this type of online social interaction, particularly during periods of social isolation, when experiencing stress, when seeking connection to peers with similar developmental and/or health conditions, and perhaps especially for youth who experience adversity or isolation in offline environments.^{12,31,4,15}
- Youth with symptoms of mental illness, such as adolescents with social anxiety, depression, or loneliness, for instance, may benefit from interactions on social media that allow for greater control, practice, and review of social interactions. Unfortunately, these populations may also be at higher risk for some of the negative facets of social media use as discussed below.

To reduce the risks of psychological harm, adolescents' exposure to content on social media that depicts illegal or psychologically maladaptive behavior, including content that instructs or encourages youth to engage in health-risk behaviors, such as self-harm (e.g., cutting, suicide), harm to others, or those that encourage eating-disordered behavior (e.g., restrictive eating, purging, excessive exercise) should be minimized, reported, and removed. Moreover, technology should not drive users to this content.

- Evidence suggests that exposure to this content is associated with increased risk of psychological harm.

Adolescents should be routinely screened for signs of “problematic social media use” that can impair their ability to engage in daily roles and routines, and may present risk for more serious psychological harms over time.

- Indicators of problematic social media use include a) a tendency to use social media even when adolescents want to stop, or realize it is interfering with necessary tasks; b) spending excessive effort to ensure continuous access to social media; c) strong cravings to use social media, or disruptions in other activities from missing social media use too much; d) repeatedly spending more time on social media than intended; e) lying or deceptive behavior to retain access to social media use; f) loss or disruption of significant relationships or educational opportunities because of media use.
- Social media use should not restrict opportunities to practice in-person reciprocal social interactions, and should not contribute to psychological avoidance of in-person social interactions.

The use of social media should be limited so as to not interfere with adolescents’ sleep and physical activity.

- Research recommends adolescents get at least 8 hours of sleep each night and maintain regular sleep-wake schedules. Data indicate that technology use particularly within 1 hour of bedtime, and social media use in particular, is associated with sleep disruptions.^{33,34} Insufficient sleep is associated with disruptions to neurological development in adolescent brains, teens’ emotional functioning,^{35,36} and risk for suicide.^{37,38}
- Adolescents’ social media use also should not interfere with or reduce adolescents’ opportunities for physical activity and exercise. Research demonstrates that adolescents who use social media for more than 11.7 hours per week have a 3.8% increase in the risk of depression.³⁹

Adolescents should limit use of social media for social comparison, particularly around beauty- or appearance-related content.

- Research suggests that using social media for social comparisons related to physical appearance, as well as excessive attention to and behaviors related to one's own photos and feedback on those photos, are related to poorer body image, disordered eating, and depressive symptoms, particularly among girls.^{42,43,44,45,46}

Adolescents' social media use should be preceded by training in social media literacy to ensure that users have developed psychologically-informed competencies and skills that will maximize the chances for balanced, safe, and meaningful social media use.

- Emerging science offers preliminary support for the efficacy of Digital Citizenship and Digital Literacy to increase the frequency of positive interactions online⁴⁷; however, more research is needed in this area.⁸
- Additional competencies could also include: 1) questioning the accuracy and representativeness of social media content; 2) understanding the tactics used to spread mis- and disinformation; 3) limiting "overgeneralization" and "mises timation" errors that lead users to incorrectly estimate others' behaviors or attitudes based on social media content (or reactions to content); 4) signs of problematic social media use; 5) how to build and nourish healthy online relationships; 6) how to solve conflicts that can emerge on social media platforms; 7) how to refrain from excessive social comparisons online and/or better understand how images and content can be manipulated; 8) as noted above, how to recognize online structural racism and critique racist messages; and 9) how to safely communicate about mental health online.

Substantial resources should be provided for continued scientific examination of the positive and negative effects of social media on adolescent development.

- A substantial investment in research funding is needed, including long-term longitudinal research, studies of younger children, and research on marginalized populations.
- Access to data among independent scientists (including data from tech com

P D I S O P N

Co-Chairs

Mary Ann McCabe, PhD, ABPP,

Mi chell J barra M• Jones •M •spelage D •ha ea ures
ma e online harassmen inciden s upse ing o ou h,, J Sch
iolence - doi

•i C •ang P Mar in-Mora inos M Bella- ernánde• M Blasco-
on ecilla H radi ional bull ing and c berbull ing in he digi al
age and i s associa ed men al heal h problems in children
and adolescen s a me a-anal sis ur Child dolesc Ps chia r
December doi s - - -

€ini € •spelage D• Peer ic imi•a ion c berbull ing
and suicide ris in children and adolescen s J M
- doi jama

ulan elli € aibi D Sci o • Sch are• •imler SC
C berbull ing and C berha e as o In erlin ed Ins ances o
C ber- ggression in dolescence S s ema ic e ie ron
Ps chol doi ps g

Cas año-Pulgarín S Suárez•-Be ancur N •ega •M •ópe•
HMH In erne social media and online ha e speech
S s ema ic re ie ggress iolen Beha
doi j a b

Boer M S e ens €•JM in enauer C an den •ijnden
JMM he course o problema ic social media use in oung
adolescen s la en class gro h anal sis Child De
e -e doi cde

Paru hi S Broo s •J D' mbrosio C e al ecommended
amoun o sleep or pedia ric popula ions consensus
s a emen o he american academ o sleep medicine J Clin
Sleep Med - doi j csm

lon•o Hussain J S ranges S nderson In erpla
be een social media use sleep quali and men al heal h in
ou h s s ema ic re ie Sleep Med e
doi j smr

Hamil on J• Chand S einhard • e al Social media use
predic s la er sleep iming and grea er sleep ariabili n
ecological momen ar assessmen s ud o ou h a high and
lo amilial ris or depression J dolesc -
doi j adolescence

Perraul Ba er • Peu rier M e al educing he use o
screen elec ronic de ices in he e ening is associa ed i h
impro ed sleep and da ime igilance in adolescen s Sleep
doi sleep •s•

el•er •H €oldenberg D uligni J •ieberman MD €ál an
Sleep ariabili in adolescence is associa ed i h al ered
brain de elopmen De Cogn Neurosci -
doi j dcn

Hamil on J• s pes -ela•n J e al Sleep in luences dail
suicidal idea ion hrough a ec i e reac i i o in erpersonal
e en s among high-ris adolescen s and oung adul s J Child
Ps chol Ps chia r - doi j cpp

•iu S eele SJ Hamil on J• e al Sleep and suicide
s s ema ic re ie and me a-anal sis o longi udinal
sudies Clin Ps chol e doi j
cpr

Shimoga S• •rl ana • ebello • ssocia ions o Social
Media Use •i h Ph sical c i i and Sleep dequac mong
don J• p34 s ema ic re ie and me a-anal ctualText (bÿ)>>BDC 8.5 0 0 8

