

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MENTAL HEALTH

While social media can add a lot to your life, it can also have some negative effects on your mental health. Here are some examples.

EDITED LIVES

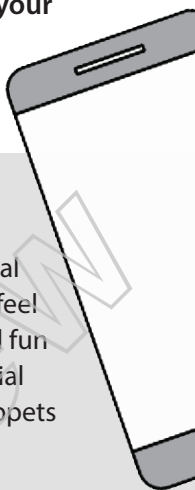
Everyone puts their best selves on social media. Sometimes, this can make you feel like everyone's life is more exciting and fun than yours. Just remember that on social media, you're only seeing selected snippets of someone's life.

SOCIAL MEDIA OBSESSION

Being obsessed with social media can make you anxious and angry when you can't use it. Social media can also take up so much of your time that your schoolwork and relationships suffer. If you are overly involved with social media, ask yourself if it is making your life better or worse.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is taking a huge toll on the mental health of so many young people today. If you are being bullied online, know that it's not your fault. Stay strong, tell someone, and ask for help. If you are someone who has been mean to others online, try to put yourself in their shoes. Think about what you're doing, and about the pain you're causing.



BE SMART WITH TECHNOLOGY

The following are some tips for enjoying technology while also looking after your mental health.

BE POSITIVE AND KIND ONLINE

Be extra polite to people online. They can't see your expression or hear your tone of voice, so what you say can easily be misunderstood. For everyone's mental health, only use social media for positive comments and to support others.

THINK CRITICALLY

Be sure to double check facts, especially for information found on social media sites. *And think for yourself.* If something doesn't feel or sound right, it probably isn't.

UNPLUG

Take technology breaks and do things that don't involve your devices. Take a walk, go for a hike, or read a book in the park. Enjoy life for a while without the ringing or buzzing of a phone.

Put your phone away during dinner, family times, and whenever you're interacting with others.

Give your full attention to the people you are with.

FOCUS ON WHAT REALLY MATTERS

Make the choice every day to value the people in your life and to enjoy the experiences you have in the real world. These are the things that make your life meaningful.

If someone you know is being harassed or threatened online, or if you witness someone threatening to harm themselves or another, tell a trusted adult right away.

For some helpful information on cyberbullying, watch this short video.

