

# Social Media and Wellbeing

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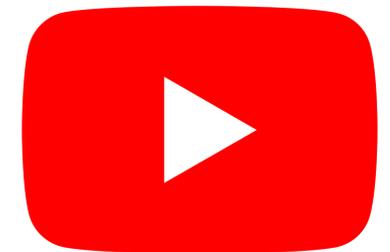
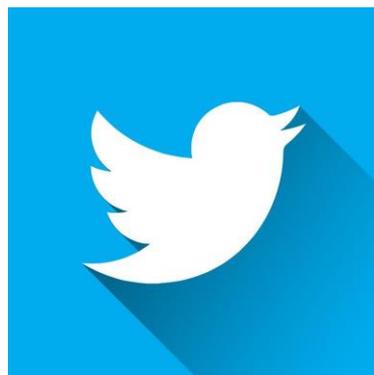
MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER IN SCHOOLS



# Aims of this workshop

- ▶ To discuss and explore some of the advantages and disadvantages of social media use.
- ▶ To understand how social media can impact wellbeing.
- ▶ To consider the impact of social media on the brain.
- ▶ To know some strategies for managing online wellbeing.
- ▶ To consider empathy and what is said

# Types of Social Media



# What is social media used for?

- ▶ Conversation with friends
- ▶ To send pictures/videos
- ▶ To watch videos
- ▶ To research
- ▶ To play games

# What are the advantages of social media?

- ▶ Develop communication and technical skills
- ▶ Building/maintaining relationships
- ▶ Campaigning for social good
- ▶ Self-expression
- ▶ Connections
- ▶ Information
- ▶ Seeking support

# What are the disadvantages of social media?

Unrealistic expectations of reality.

Lack of sleep.

Desire to change appearance.

Cyberbullying.

FOMO - Fear of missing out.

Excessive use can lead to feelings of anxiety, low mood and isolation.

Addiction

# Cyberbullying

- One in eight 12-15 year olds report being bullied on social media - this is the same as face-to-face bullying!
- It is hard to get away from - it can reach a lot of people!
- It can be repeated - through sharing and comments.
- It can happen at any time, any day.
- It can be anonymous.
- It is difficult to police/punish.

# Impact on wellbeing

- Feeling inadequate
- Worry about comments, sharing
- Not feeling good enough
- Self worth based on number of likes
- Feeling isolated
- FOMO - envy
- Poor self-esteem

# The Adolescent Brain

Adolescence brings a difficult time of balance due to the conflict of physical capability and socially allowed independence.

Many behavioural/emotional changes at this time are due to brain changes as opposed to hormonal issues.

A change in neuro structure can lead to:

- ▶ Increase irritability, anhedonia and risk taking behaviour
- ▶ Reward processing
- ▶ Different decision making capacity

Synaptic pruning can result in a loss of paths

Well worn paths

# The impact of social media on the brain

- ▶ It provides the same neural circuitry as recreational drugs/gambling
- ▶ Likes and shares can create a chemical reaction in the brain similar to using cocaine
- ▶ Reward centres are heightened when talking about ourselves- in the real world we only do this 30-40% of the time, compared to 80% on social media
- ▶ Worse if it's used as a coping mechanism
- ▶ It can lead to a behavioural addiction
- ▶ It may look like any other addiction

# Social Media Addiction

To determine if someone is at risk of developing an addiction to social media, ask these 6 questions:

- ▶ Do they spend a lot of time thinking about social media or planning to use social media?
- ▶ Do they feel urges to use social media more and more?
- ▶ Do they use social media to forget about personal problems?
- ▶ Do they often try to reduce use of social media without success?
- ▶ Do they become restless or troubled if unable to use social media?
- ▶ Do they use social media so much that it has had a negative impact on their job or studies?

A “yes” to more than 3 of these questions may indicate the presence of a social media addiction.

# How can social media be used responsibly and safely?

- What we need to tell young people:
- Delete and unfollow people
- Set yourself boundaries/time limits
- Be kind
- Follow those who help you - is it a healthy or unhealthy account?
- Create positive content
- Reality is better
- Stop comparing
- Report it!

# Empathy

“Empathy is the ability to emotionally understand what other people feel, see things from their point of view, and imagine yourself in their place. Essentially, it is putting yourself in someone else's position and feeling what they must be feeling. When you see another person suffering, you might be able to instantly envision yourself in the other person's place and feel sympathy for what they are going through.”

# Talk to young people about their tone

Should we always say everything we are thinking?

What can we ask ourselves if we are not sure if we should say something or not?

- ▶ 'you are the best friend ever'
- ▶ 'I love that idea'
- ▶ 'what are you wearing'
- ▶ 'what are you going to do about it'
- ▶ 'I'm coming to get you now'

Can we take it back??



# THINK!

- ▶ **T**True - are you spreading gossip or fake news?
- ▶ **H**elpful - does sharing help?
- ▶ **I**nspiring - does it inspire someone?
- ▶ **N**ecessary - does it need to be said?
- ▶ **K**ind - is it kind or hurtful?

Space for questions

