

Supporting your child to stay well online



Social media and mental health

Lots of young people use social media and it's likely that your child will use some form of online communication.

This leaflet aims to give parents information about social media, its potential effects on mental health, and what to do if you're worried about your child's use of social media.

What is social media?

Social media sites are where people share content and communicate with others online. This can be through posting statuses, sharing photos and videos, and commenting on or 'liking' posts.

Examples of social media sites include Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and WhatsApp.

Some online gaming platforms also have an online social aspect, such as Xbox Live.



What are the benefits of social media?

Social media can be a great space for your child to:

- develop friendships
- share their personal stories
- connect with others going through similar experiences
- get involved with or campaign for things they are passionate about
- feel less alone.

Can it affect my child's wellbeing?

Sometimes, pressures from social media can cause low mood in young people, as they may compare their own life to that of others online.

It can also cause some young people to feel anxious or stressed, particularly if they:

- spend too much time online
- experience cyberbullying
- have online relationships
- are viewing unsafe content.



Tips for supporting your child stay well online

Talk to your child about their social media use. Be open to learning about how and who they communicate with online.

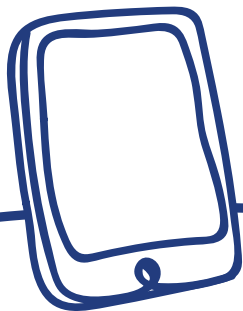
Make sure they know how to report unsafe content on social media and block anyone who is making them feel uncomfortable.

Help them to find the right online/offline balance. Perhaps plan a family activity or suggest they spend time with their friends.

Look for further information. You could suggest they look at the Childline website at childline.org.uk for ideas on how to stay safe online.

Encourage them to take regular breaks from social media if they think it would help.

Look for options for support. Visit the Mind website at mind.org.uk/cyp-support for more ideas on where you can find help.



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