

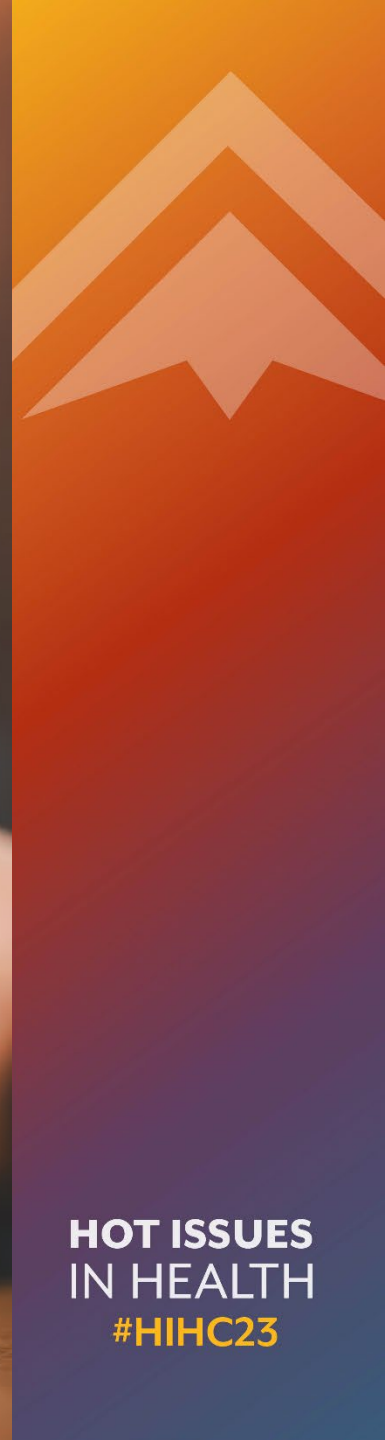
Screens

A Youth-Led Guide
to Mental Health in
the Age of Social Media



HOT ISSUES
IN HEALTH
#HIHC23

- ***Emily Johnson**, Director of Policy Analysis, CHI*
- ***Suman Mathur**, Program Manager, CHI*
- ***Alli Daley**, Policy Director, Partners for Children's Mental Health*
- *Youth Leaders from the **Colorado Youth Congress**, **Young Aspiring Americans for Social and Political Activism**, and **Youth Council on Mental Health***



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Key Takeaways

1. Young people are worried about social media
2. Emerging evidence points to potential dangers of social media
3. Youth drive many of these decisions

Definitions of Social Media Are Broad



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BBC NEWS

BBC News

Social media:
How (some) use can
be good for teenagers



“Social media
provides you with
education and alarms
you to things you
wouldn’t otherwise
be aware of.”



“Snapchat

is how I interact with and share
my life with family and friends.”

“It exposes you
to other cultures
even if you can’t
travel.”



Harvard School of Public Health
@HarvardChanSPH

“Social media use can be
positive for mental health
and well-being”

Me:



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Social media is driving teen mental health crisis, surgeon general warns

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16K



Social media presents 'profound risk of harm'

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242K



How addictive, endless scrolling is bad for your mental health

Like Comment Share

125K

All Comments

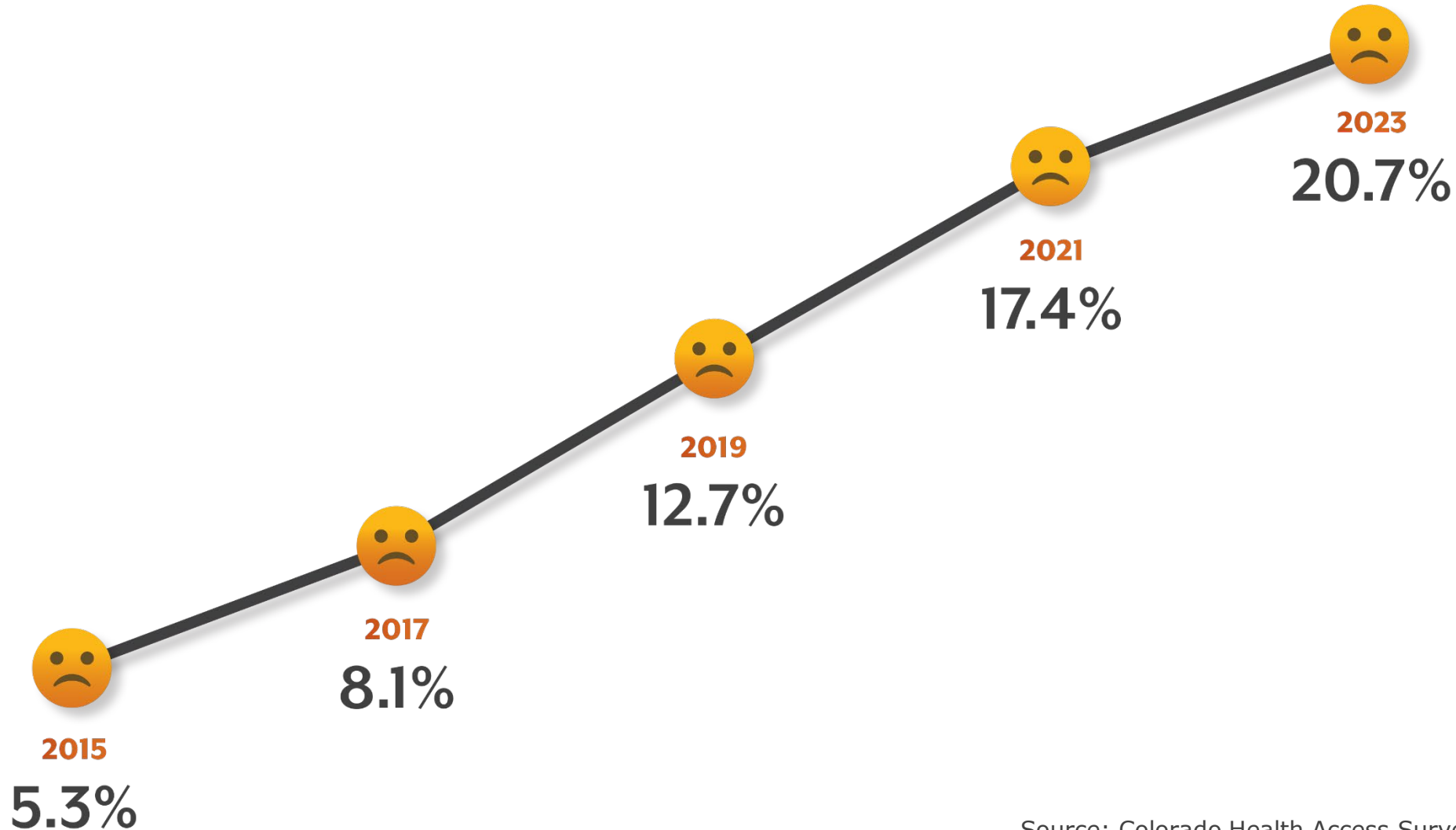
"Social media increases my anxiety."

"I was addicted to TikTok during COVID. It got to the point where I didn't find anything else entertaining."

"My friends and I talk a lot about how social media is hurting us."

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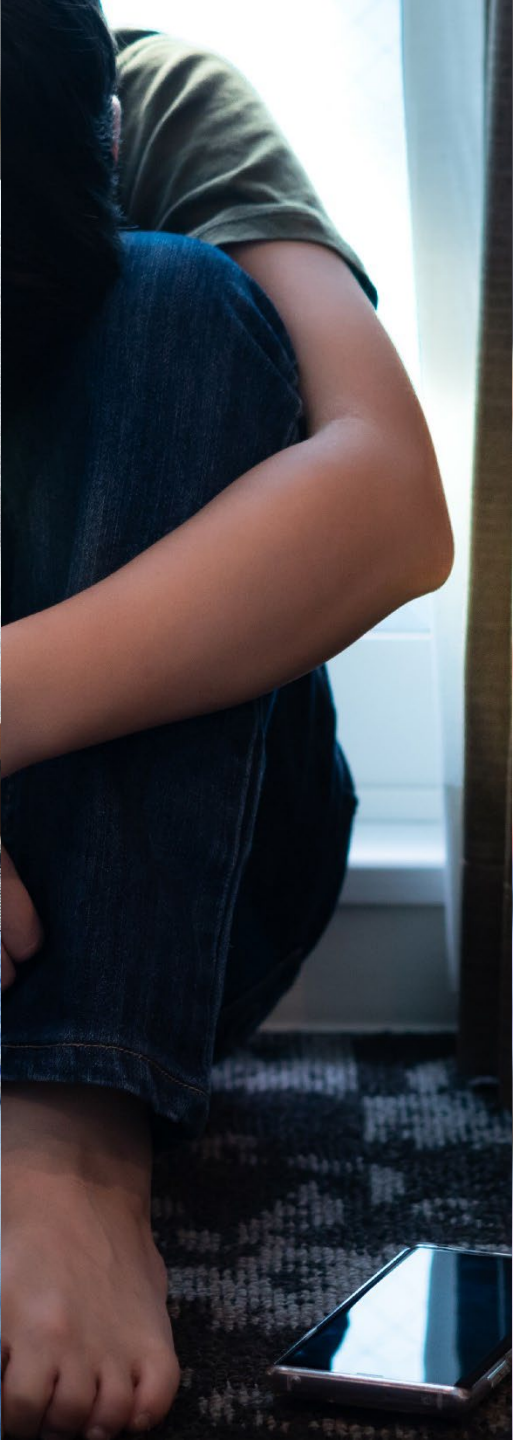
Poor Mental Health Among Adolescents Ages 10-18



Source: Colorado Health Access Survey

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More screens → less sleep:

- Late bedtimes
- Endless scrolling and engaging
- Blue light after dark

Less sleep → poor mental health



- 23% of teens say these platforms make them feel worse about their own lives
- 31% of teens say these platforms lead to “FOMO”
- 38% of teens feel overwhelmed by drama on social media



- The mere presence of a phone reduces cognitive capacity
- Teens get an average of 237 notifications per day on their phones
- Phone distractions increase stress and anxiety



- Nearly half of teens have experienced cyberbullying
- Online harassment hits older teen girls the hardest
- Victims are at a higher risk of depression, suicidal thoughts, and post-traumatic stress disorders

Sources: Pew Research Center, Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking



- Two in three teens are exposed to hate-based content on social media
- Content often glamorizes self-harm behaviors
- Validation and reinforcement drive engagement

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, American Psychological Association, Canadian Medical Association Journal, *The Chaos Machine*

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Promoting the Healthy and Safe Use of Social Media

Social media use is a topic that affects every stage of health supervision, from before birth to adulthood. Health care professionals should understand the benefits and risks involved with social media use in the families they serve. This theme explores various types of social media use that a health care professional should be prepared to discuss with families during all preventive visits, from the prenatal period through young adulthood. Social media are the latest representation of all media and have an ever-increasing effect on communication, interpersonal relations, development, and health. Traditional media, such as television (TV), movies, and games, are discussed in Bright Futures Health Supervision Visits.



Social media are Web sites or applications that allow users to create and share content, interact with other users. There are many types of social media sites and applications, and more are always being developed. On social media, people share information about themselves, share links to content, create content (eg, blogs), upload video or audio, comment on content, engage in conversations, play games, organize events, and otherwise connect with other users.

Although many parents are comfortable with their children using social media and use it regularly, they may not fully understand all of its capabilities and they may not understand the risks associated with their children. Used properly, social media can provide children and families with opportunities for social networks, social support, and opportunities for learning. For patients and families with chronic health problems, social media can provide education, the ability to connect with others who share the same struggles, and access to helpful resources.

At the same time, however, social media also pose some risks. Many of the risks associated with social media are not so much inherent to the technology itself as they are related to the ability of users to amplify and make public their concerns. For children and youth, the use of social media and other digital technology use itself can be associated with or sleep problems. It is important for parents to be media literate so that they can help their children understand these risks and benefits.

Social Media and Youth Mental Health

2023

The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Health Advisory on Social Media Use in Adolescence

MAY 2023



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