Navigating the Digital Age: Social Media's Impact on the Young Mind.

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Why Talk about Social Media and its Impact on Youth?

Children/Adolescents/Young Adults are among the largest users of social media

Social Media is a portal for communication, learning and entertainment for children & adolescents

Adolescents spend 5+ hours per day checking, posting, etc. on social media

Children 4-11 can spend 2+ hours a day on games, youtube, etc.

Adolescents often log into their favorite social media sites more than 100 times per day

Most sites are not designed with their safety in mind

Why Talk about Social Media and its Impact on Children/Adolescents? (cont.)

- Pre-teens/Teens at an age where they have difficulty regulating and expressing emotions

- Hugely susceptible to peer pressure

- Risks associated with online/media use

- Growing up in a technology, digital and screen saturated world, where they can reach anyone, anywhere at anytime.

- Social media provides opportunity for online expressions of offline behaviors such as bullying, clique forming, and sexual experimentation

  - Potentially introducing problems such as, cyberbullying, sexting, privacy issues, and are adding to potential addiction and sleep deprivation. For children exposure to violence and pornography, that the young brain struggles to understand.

Why is Social Media So Appealing?

- Ability to share information quickly

- They experience:

  - Independence, social consciousness, identity and connection

- Provides the instant gratification that teens seek

  - Particularly when they receive notification by others via posts, likes, hearts, thumbs up, etc.

- These are signals that provide short term reward,

  - The increase in dopamine impacts the importance, value and truth to what they are seeing

Popular Social Media Sites for Youth

- TikTok
- Snapchat
- Instagram
- Youtube
- Reddit
- Discord

2020

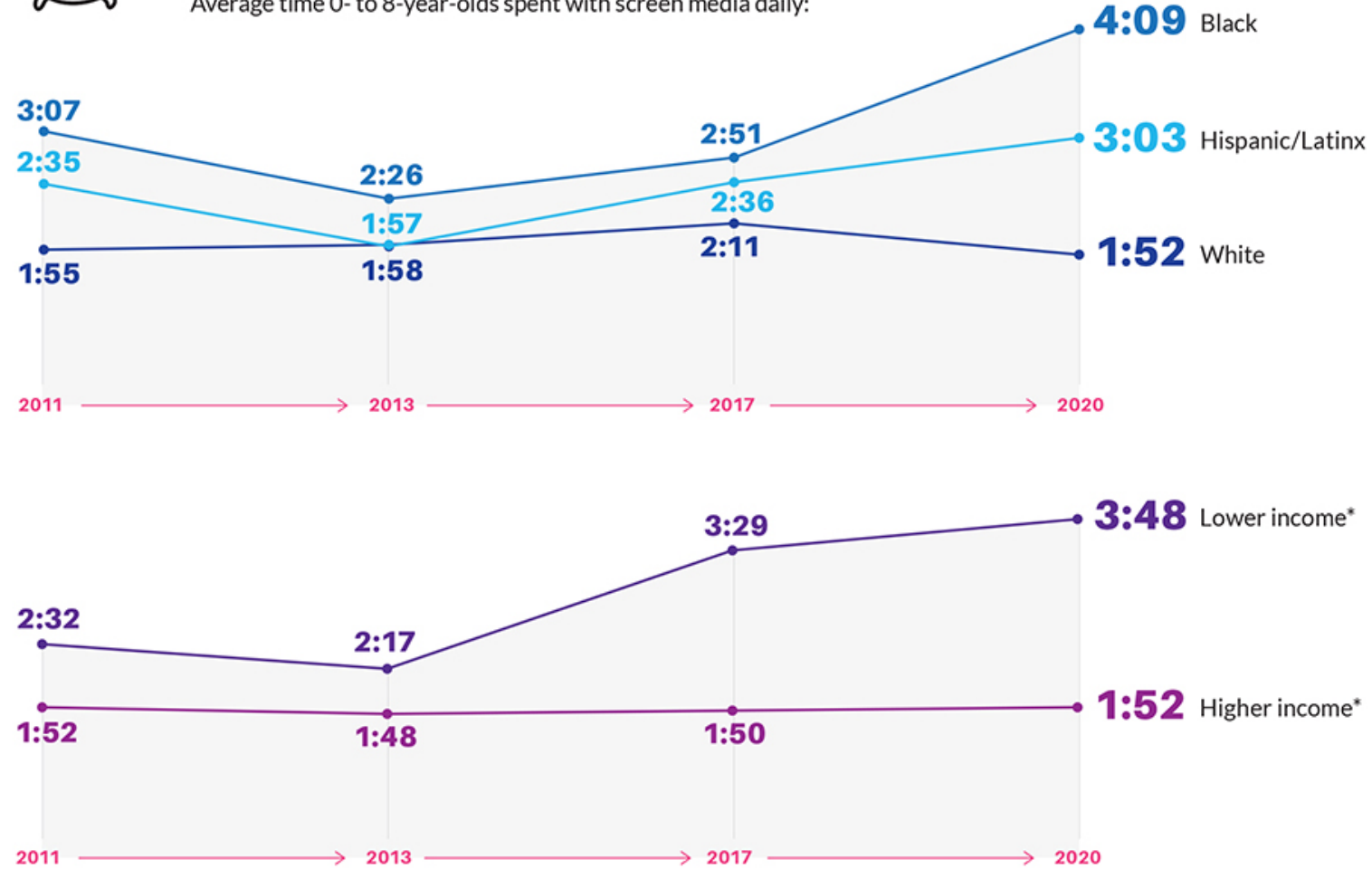# The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Kids Age Zero to Eight
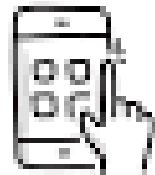
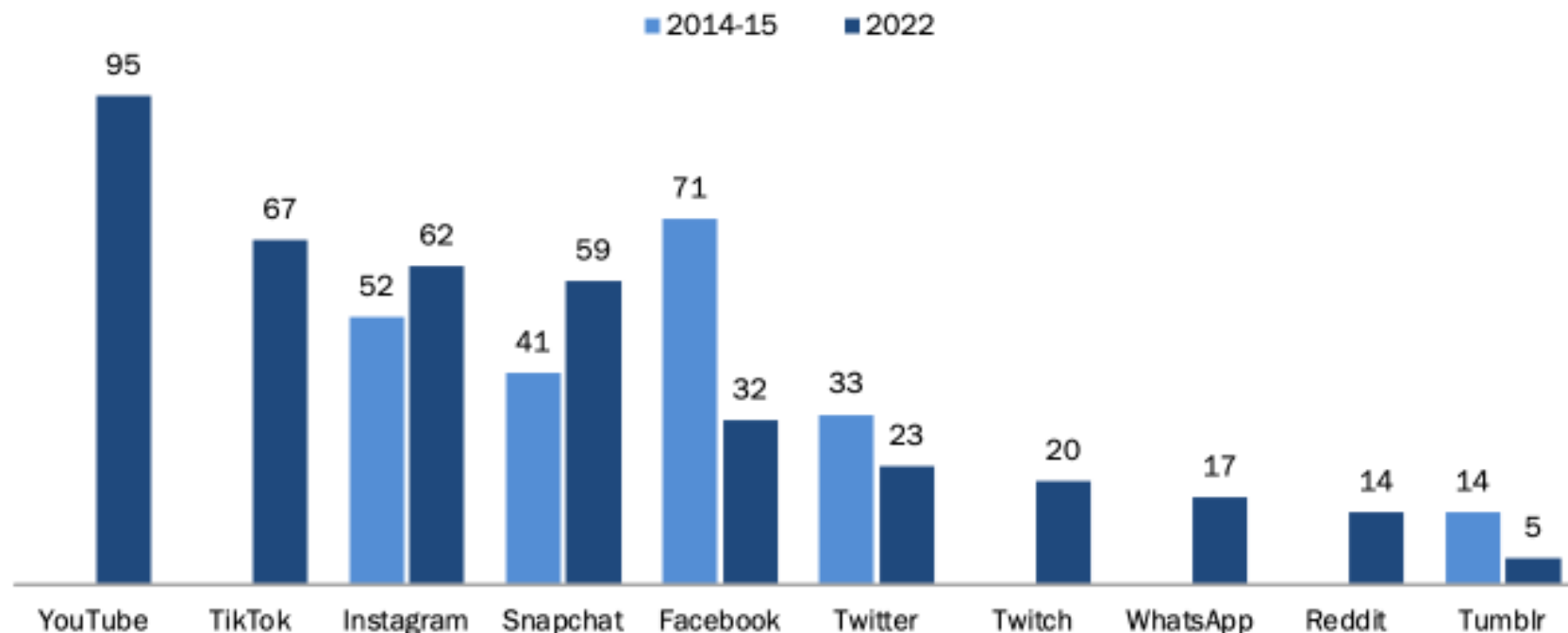Children 8 and younger use almost two and a half hours (2:24) of screen media a day.

Children under 2	0:49
2- to 4-year-olds	2:30
5- to 8-year-olds	3:05

Differences in screen time by race/ethnicity and income continue to expand.

Average time 0- to 8-year-olds spent with screen media daily:

4:09 Black

3:07

3:03 Hispanic/Latinx

2:51

2:35

2:26

2:36

1:57

1:52 White

1:55

1:58

2:11

2011 → 2013 → 2017 → 2020

3:48 Lower income*

3:29

2:32

2:17

1:52 Higher income*

1:52

1:48

1:50

2011 → 2013 → 2017 → 2020

Majority of teens use YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat; share of teens who use Facebook dropped sharply from 2014-15 to now

% of U.S. teens who say they ever use each of the following apps or sites

■ 2014-15   ■ 2022

App/Site	2014-15	2022
YouTube		95
TikTok		67
Instagram	52	62
Snapchat	41	59
Facebook	71	32
Twitter	33	23
Twitch		20
WhatsApp		17
Reddit		14
Tumblr	14	5

Note: Teens refer to those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown. The 2014-15 survey did not ask about YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitch and Reddit. TikTok debuted globally in 2018.
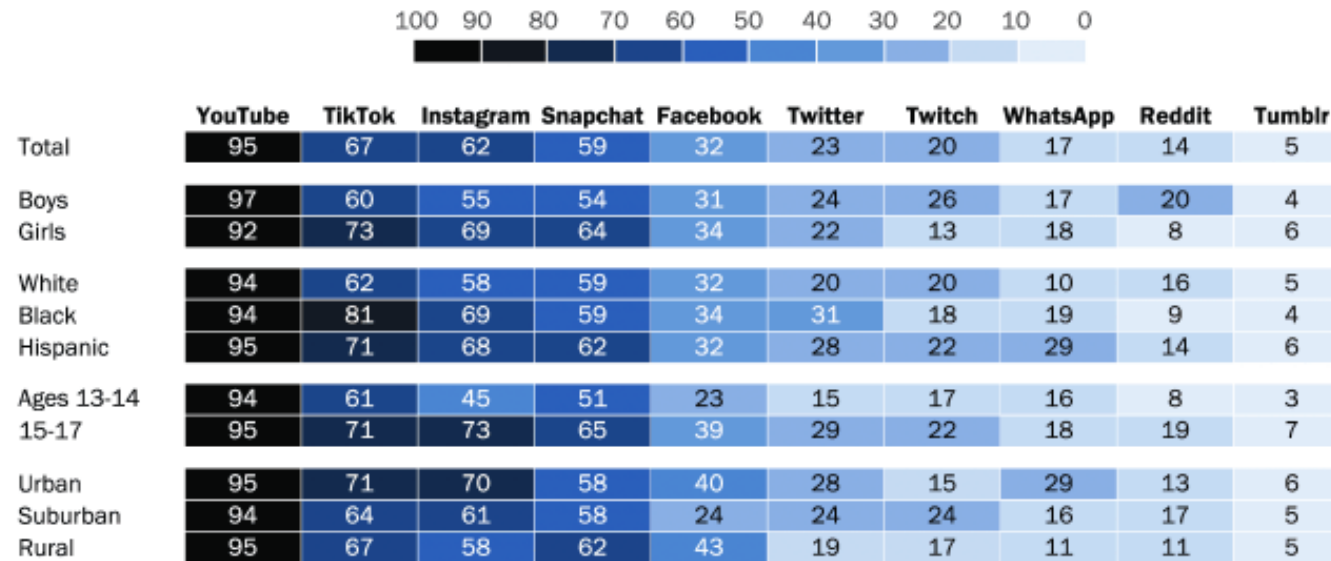Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.
"Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022"

Teen girls are more likely than boys to use TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat; teen boys more likely to use Twitch, Reddit and YouTube; and Black teens are especially drawn to TikTok compared with other groups

% of U.S. teens who say they ever use each of the following apps or sites

100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0

	YouTube	TikTok	Instagram	Snapchat	Facebook	Twitter	Twitch	WhatsApp	Reddit	Tumblr
Total	95	67	62	59	32	23	20	17	14	5
Boys	97	60	55	54	31	24	26	17	20	4
Girls	92	73	69	64	34	22	13	18	8	6
White	94	62	58	59	32	20	20	10	16	5
Black	94	81	69	59	34	31	18	19	9	4
Hispanic	95	71	68	62	32	28	22	29	14	6
Ages 13-14	94	61	45	51	23	15	17	16	8	3
15-17	95	71	73	65	39	29	22	18	19	7
Urban	95	71	70	58	40	28	15	29	13	6
Suburban	94	64	61	58	24	24	24	16	17	5
Rural	95	67	58	62	43	19	17	11	11	5

Household income

	YouTube	TikTok	Instagram	Snapchat	Facebook	Twitter	Twitch	WhatsApp	Reddit	Tumblr
< $30,000	93	72	64	60	44	26	17	19	10	4
$30K-$74,999	94	68	62	57	39	24	19	19	13	7
$75,000+	95	65	62	60	27	22	21	17	16	4

Note: Teens refer to those ages 13 to 17. Not all numerical differences between groups shown are statistically significant. Those who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown. White and Black teens include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic teens are of any race.
Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.
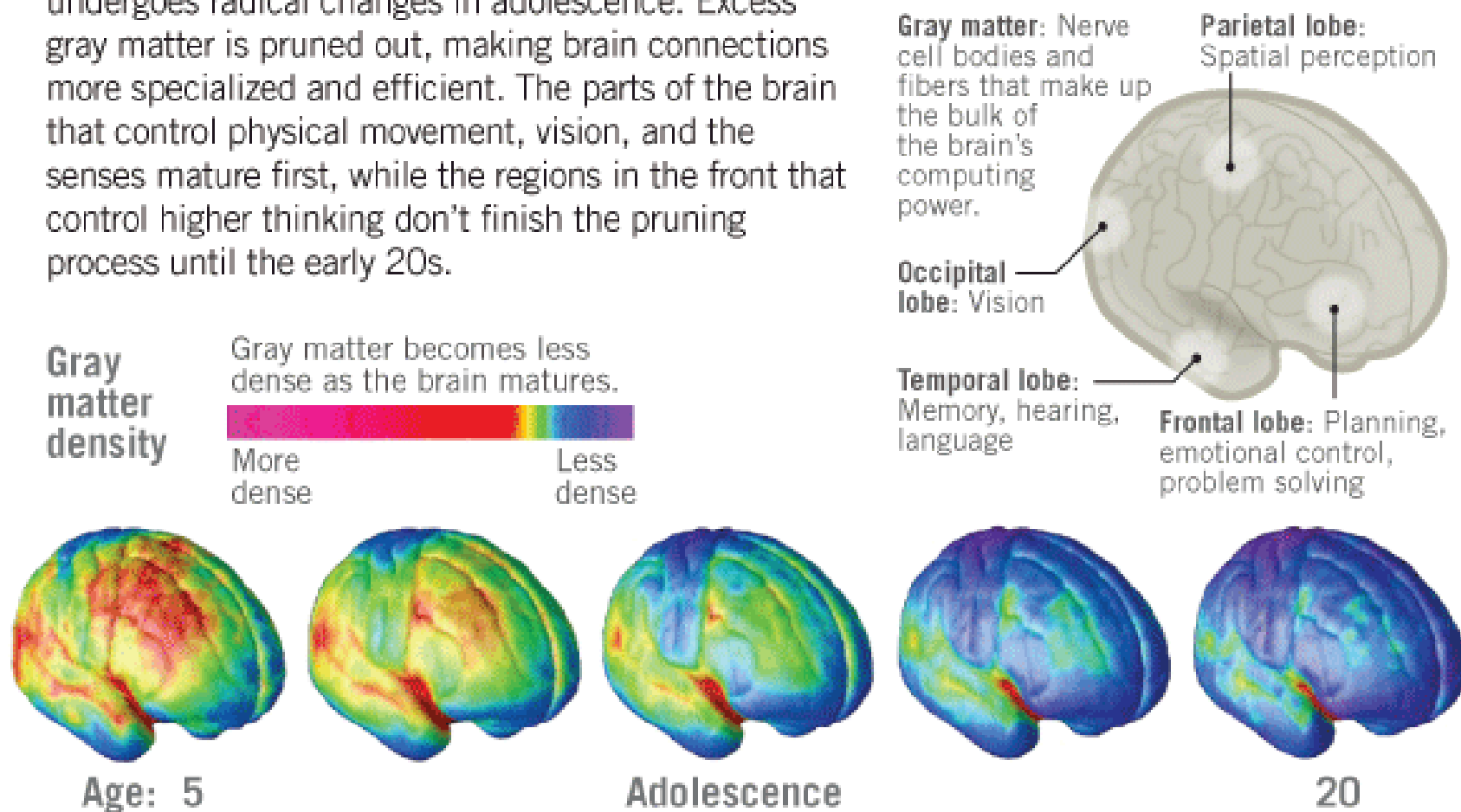"Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Their Brain is Under Construction

Growing a Grown-up Brain

Scientists have long thought that the human brain was formed in early childhood. But by scanning children's brains with an MRI year after year, they discovered that the brain undergoes radical changes in adolescence. Excess gray matter is pruned out, making brain connections more specialized and efficient. The parts of the brain that control physical movement, vision, and the senses mature first, while the regions in the front that control higher thinking don't finish the pruning process until the early 20s.

Gray matter: Nerve cell bodies and fibers that make up the bulk of the brain's computing power.

Parietal lobe: Spatial perception

Occipital lobe: Vision

Temporal lobe: Memory, hearing, language

Frontal lobe: Planning, emotional control, problem solving

Gray matter density

Gray matter becomes less dense as the brain matures.

More dense — Less dense

Age: 5   Adolescence   20

4 Critical Factors: Healthy Child Development

Movement

Touch

Human Connection

Exposure to Nature

4 Essentials
For Teen Brain Development

Blossoming

Pruning

Myelination

Hormones

Benefits of Social Media

- Builds Technical Skills/Competent Citizens in a Digital Age
- Hastens & Increases Communication
- Enhances Social Connections
    - Extends friendships/Network/Study Groups
    - Can be supportive
    - Connects peers with teams, clubs, etc.
- Socialization & Communication
    - Virtual Empathy and Compassion
    - Platform for shared interests, social networking
- Enhanced Learning Opportunities and Creativity
    - Share music, art, etc.
    - Key source of information/Connection with Educators
    - Peer Based Learning
    - Broader perspective of other cultures around the globe
    - Volunteer get involved in community and social awareness
- Assessing Health Information
    - Key source of information

Flipside of Social Media Use

- Cyberbullying
- Privacy/Safety
- Risk Reputation
- Mental Health
- Inappropriate/Harmful Content
- Time Drain

Social Media and Mental Health

- Pressure to remain connected 24/7
    - be available and responsive all the times
- Sleep is interrupted/don't sleep
- Unable to concentrate or focus during activities
    - school, work, sports, family time . . . . .
- Irritable
- Depressed and anxious
- Impacts how they see themselves
- Cell phone and media become center of the universe for teens

Social Media & Mental Health

- Screen time decreases pertinent social skills

- Helps them avoid becoming self-regulatory. Use devices to self-regulate thus avoiding dealing with hormonal imbalances, stressors and boredom.

- Need down time off of technology to self reflect, deal with boredom and to socially interact with others face-face.

- Impairment in the development of empathy can lead to caring less about others and what happens to them.

- When young people reframe their relationship with social media, it can reduce the negative impact on mental health.
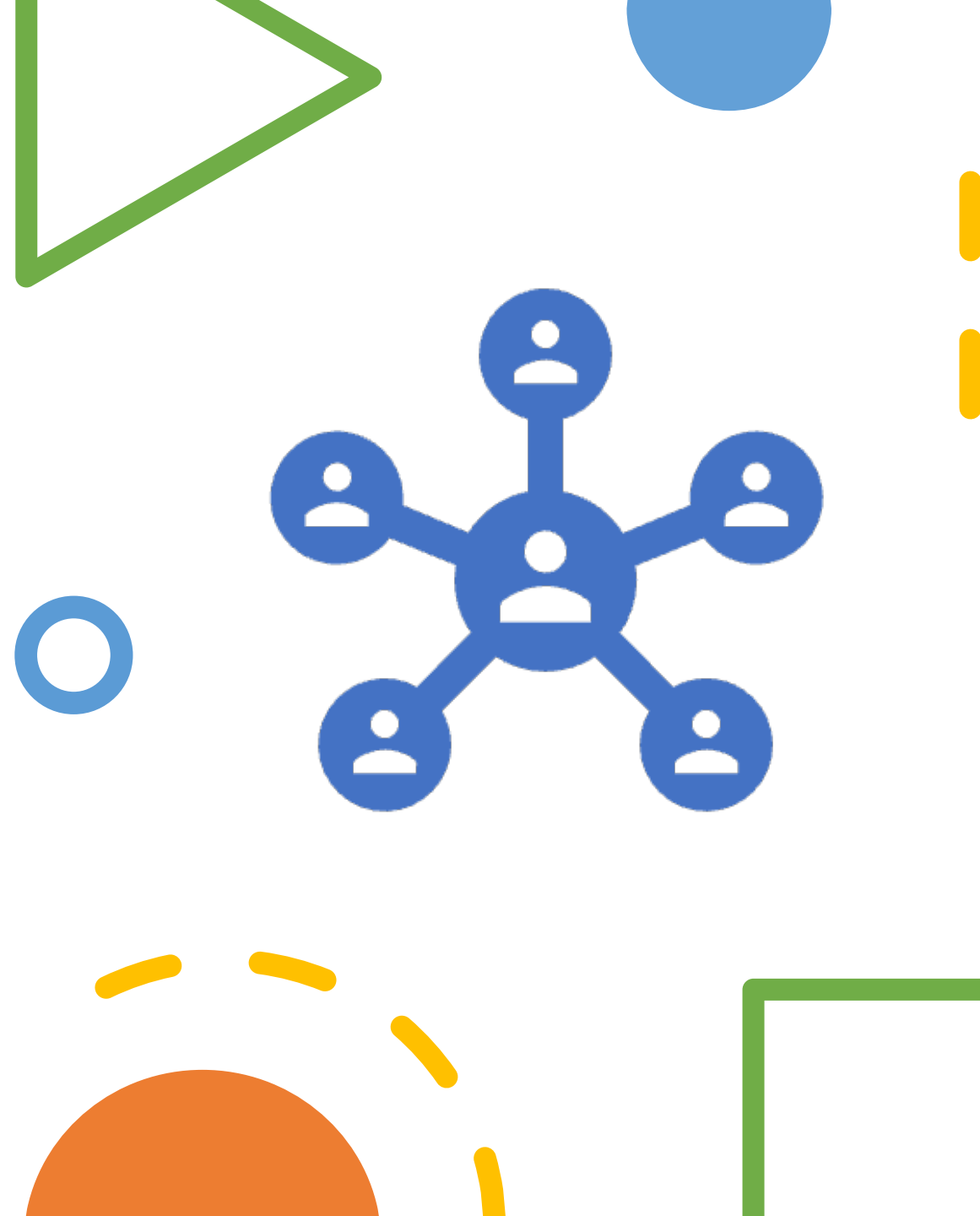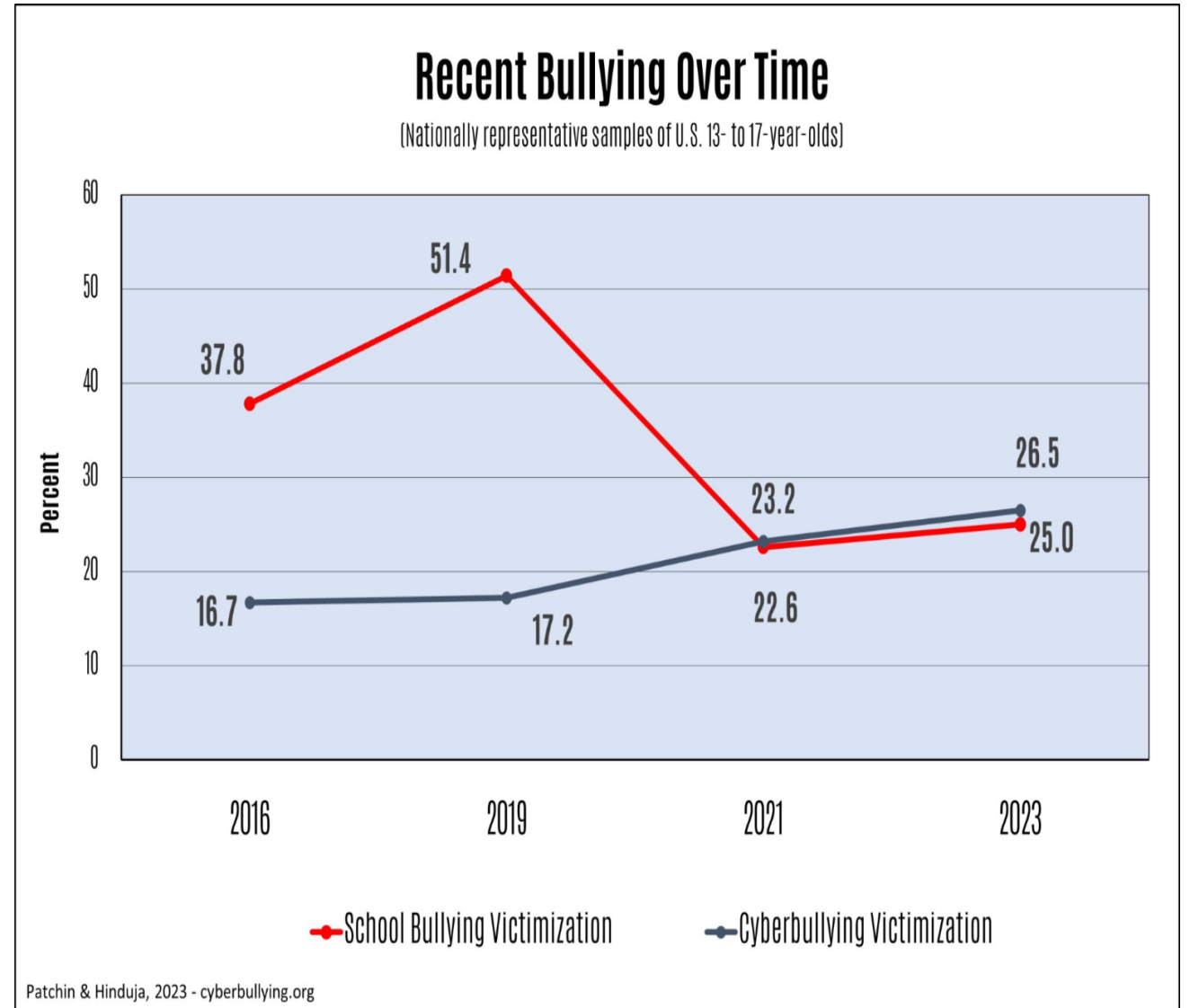
Social Media and Mental Health

- Parental involvement and intervention can have a positive impact on mental health

- Parents helping teens limit usage beneficial

- Strong parent/child/teen connections can help absorb harm from content exposure.

- Children and teens with low life satisfaction more at risk.

- Video-centered platforms may pose a bigger risk to children and teens because of the contents never-ending loop.

- Texting: immediate gratification and significant anxiety producer

Cyberbullying on the Rise

- Someone posted mean or hurtful comments about me on line. (77.5%)
- Someone spread rumors about me online. (70.4%)
- Someone embarrassed or humiliated me online. (69.1%)
- Someone intentionally excluded me from a group chat or group text, (66.4%)
- Someone repeatedly contacted me online or via text after I had asked them to stop. (55.5%)

Patchin, J. W. (2023). Cyberbullying Continues to Rise among Youth in the United States.
https://cyberbullying.org/cyberbullying-continues-to-rise-among-youth-in-the-united-states-2023

Recent Bullying Over Time
(Nationally representative samples of U.S. 13- to 17-year-olds)

School Bullying Victimization: 37.8 (2016), 51.4 (2019), 23.2 (2021), 25.0 (2023)
Cyberbullying Victimization: 16.7 (2016), 17.2 (2019), 22.6 (2021), 26.5 (2023)

Patchin & Hinduja, 2023 - cyberbullying.org

Cyberbullying and mental health

- ❏ Correlation between Cyberbullying, anxiety and depression
- ❏ Apps like Snapchat, Reddit, Instagram have the highest frequency of target cyberbullying.
- ❏ Females more often than males are the targets of the cyberbullying.
- ❏ Victims report loss of self-esteem and withdraw.
- ❏ Victims reports school avoidance, high absenteeism, deteriorating grades and behavioral problems.
- ❏ Depression levels increased in most cases, for those with pre-existing depression.
- ❏ Increasing numbers of individuals reporting self-harm and suicidal ideation as the result of cyberbullying.
- ❏ Youth are encouraged to engage in risky behaviors online that can also result in death or serious injury as a part of the pressure from online individuals.

Sexting

Sexting—the sharing of sexually explicit images, videos, or messages through electronic means

A recent study published in *JAMA Pediatrics* showed that sexting has become more common among adolescents. Researchers examined the data on 39 previously published studies. Participants ranged in age from 12 to 17 years old, with average age of 15 years old. Results of their review indicated the following:

At least 1 in 4 teens are receiving sexually explicit texts and emails

At least 1 in 7 are sending sexts

More than 1 in 10 teens are forwarding sexts without consent

About 1 in 12 teens have had sexts they've sent forwarded without their consent

Impact of Excessive Amounts on Children

- Increase in technology leads to sedentary lifestyle, weight and health issues early

- Impacts concentration, focus for learning.

- Not enough reading, creative play and games can impact their preparedness to cope with changes in technology and society over time.

- Increase in dysregulated behaviors.

Problematic Interactive Media Use: PIMU

- PIMU a term coined by Michael Rich, MD "the Mediatrician" and colleagues at Boston Children's Hospital.

- Overuse of a necessary resource.

- Driven by psychological disorders-ADHD, anxiety, etc.

- Continued use despite negative consequences

- Goal of treatment: self-regulation

- Similar to how we treat Binge Eating Disorder

PIMU

- Inability to regulate use of interactive media with negative effects on key elements of their lives including:
  - Sleep
  - Nutrition
  - Academic performance
  - Social Life
  - Relationships
  - Mental Health

Presentation of PIMU

Video Gaming

- Excessive gaming on a computer, console or multiple devices
- Disrupts sleep, homework, meals, family time, face to face interactions and exercise.
- Appearance of defiant and aggressive behavior when asked to stop

Social Media

- Use of Social media as main means of connecting with others
- Limited face to face communication with others
- Doom scrolling
- Cyberbullying
- Sexting

Info Bingeing

- Following threads of online forums and blogs
- Binge watching short and long-term videos
- Doing so in place of other activities

Pornography

- Uses to meet sexual needs
- Creates slowing and confusion in sexual development

Video gaming connections

- Using video games to connect with peers is a strong driver of young people's interest in play
- Being a "gamer" can also be an important facet of social identity for children, especially for boys.
- Boys know, which games are popular and their use of these games can impact their social capital within friend groups
- Boys also often integrate their game preferences into their identities
- For girls, the gamer experience can be harder to navigate
- Social gaming platforms and features became even more important during COVID -19 "lockdowns", when children and adolescents had to move their social interactions to a virtual space
- Online cooperative play with friends, use of gaming to connect with family

COVID Impact

Pre-existing mental health problems

Restricted to home, for all activities

Increased use of social media and the consequences of that for all age groups

Online schooling

Accelerated mental health issues

Fast forward to today's world

- Growing up in today's society means regularly engaging with technology.

- During the pandemic, screen time increased, both out of necessity during remote schooling and for connection.

- Use has remained high.

- Technology and media are important tools for social connection, education, entertainment, and advocacy that pervade the daily lives of children and teens.

- Necessary for them to understand how to use these tools and be good citizens in the digital world.

Digital Citizenship

Helps kids and teens safe online and in digital spaces

dangers of sharing personal information online

Importance of password protection

The reduction of identity fraud

How to protect self from less defined digital threats, like reputation

Privacy and Reputation

Knowledge around digital footprint. Thus, they must understand how to use these tools and be good citizens in the digital world.

Safety and Security

Self Discovery Directs Change

- Education

- How Use Matters/Evaluation
  - Screening questions
  - Understanding how long-term use impacts mental health and life

Self-Discovery

- Therapist your responsibility to keep up with platforms
- One more way to connect with clients (in session via awareness)
- What do particular social media (apps, platforms) mean to you, do for you? (escapism, boredom relief, find identity, connect with peers, etc.)
- Have a non-judgmental view
- What are some challenges they have encountered
- If client really loves say Discord, TikTok- what do they like about it?
- What makes a good video?
- What type of videos do they engage with most (algorithms)

Education/Self-Discovery

Screening questions to help teens become more aware through self discovery.

How Use Matters:

1. Why do you use social media
2. How does it make you feel
3. What are your favorite social media sites
4. What do you like best
5. What isn't so great about it
6. When not connected with tech, who do you hang out with
7. Are they craving the connection
8. Do they constantly catching themselves checking it or feeling internal pressure to check media
9. Does it create anxiety when individual is on the media
10. Do they report FOMO or FOBLO

Teen Self-Reflection

- Help teens to recognize the limitations of social media and that too much social media time distracts from engaging in more meaningful interactions

- Encourage teens to increase more face-to-face communication time with friends and others

  - Direct vs. Indirect communication

- Ask teens to evaluate underlying reasons/needs to use social media, what triggers their use, triggers, needs, beliefs about social media and their use. What do they think is overuse? Are they experiencing negative effects as a result of their social media use?

A Matter of Balance

- One's social media well-being is based on how you use it.

- Are the social networks being used to connect or compare.

- Humans are social beings, our brains are wired to connect and social media encourages sharing and connecting. This is especially important for teens.

- Disconnect from reality- "escapism"

Teach to Upgrade by One

Text to call

Call to video

Video to in-person (face to face)

Social-emotional skills

- Empathy

- Kindness

- Personal Responsibility

These 3 skills essential for both offline and online interactions

Rules of Regulation

- Shift of Perception

- Technology, phone and social media free times (an app breakfree-tracks time on your phone.)

- Delete some social media

- Engage in other activities that increase social skills, healthy interests, hobbies (non-technology related)

- Develop skills that are lacking and driving indulgent use of social media

- Develop boredom

Empathy Building Skills

Essence of Relationship Building

Empathy   Respect

Warmth   Genuineness
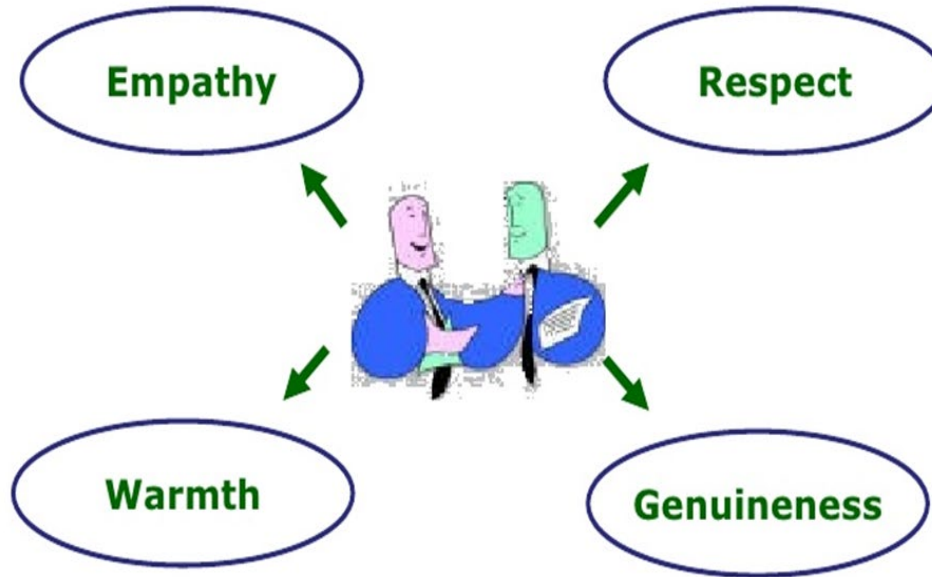
- Its not about you

- Its about the people around you

- Try and put yourself in the other persons shoes

- Practice empathy in everyday life

Best Practices for Adolescent Social Media Use

- Think before the post

- Follow the WWGS rule

- Assume what is posted isn't private, even if it is sent as a private message

- Realize what is posted is _permanent_, even if it is deleted (_Educate yourself about digital footprints_)

- Be aware of how online activity affects their future and reputation (professional and personal)

- Life over "likes"

- Moderation

Guide for Parents

Caution: restricting or stalking maybe counterproductive

Encourage parents to:

- become more educated
- Reduce quantity versus quality of SM use/Create
- Develop critical thinking
- be healthy role model, healthy media uses at home
- Encouraging times to do other healthy activities: exercise, outside the home activities.
- have regular conversations with their teen(s) about online use and discuss issues specific to the challenges faced by today's adolescents on social media
- Use Media with teens: learn and teach
- Devices are tools not treats

Digital Wellness

"Digital Wellness is an intentional state of physical, mental and social health that occurs within mindful engagement in the digital and natural environment."

Michael Rich, MD 11/11/2023

The 5 M's of Digital Wellness

- Model-Be the change you want to see

- Mentor-Responsible, Respectful, Digital Contract

- Monitor-Do Not Be the Digital Police

- Memories-Make the IRL

- Mastery- guardrails, mindfully

- Be Balanced

- Be Mindful

- Be Present

Instead of developing killer apps, develop killer BEs

Closing Statements