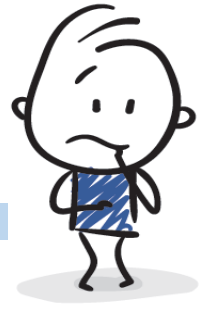


## Young Person Guide to Supporting Mental Health in Using Social Media

Social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and YouTube can help you to connect with others and learn new things. But it can also be addictive, pressurising and intrusive and can potentially lead to low self-esteem and social disconnection. Cyberbullying is using technology to deliberately hurt, humiliate, harass, or threaten someone else.



### Social media and mental health problems:

Some research suggests that excessive use of social media can increase loneliness, depression and anxiety.

### 10 TOP TIPS for supporting your mental health in using social media:

- 1 Set a positive example:** When online, remember you shouldn't say something that you wouldn't say to someone in person. Also, establish technology free time yourself.
- 2 Avoid lots of 'passive' screen use:** Screen activity that requires little thinking or engagement may be relaxing for short periods, but can negatively impact our mental health if a lot of time is spent on this.
- 3 Keep to age recommendations.** They are there to keep you safe. Some material online is not helpful and can be upsetting.
- 4 Share your online experience.** If spending time online you can still interact with friends and family by discussing what you are viewing and playing games together.
- 5 Balance social life on and offline.** It's important to take a break from social media and spend face to face time with friends and family doing things you enjoy.
- 6 Have healthy screen time alternatives.** Enjoy non-screen based hobbies, interests and activities, spending time outdoors and exercising.
- 7 Don't compare yourself with others.** Social media often shows selected highlights, not the reality of someone's life. Comparing ourselves can negatively affect our self-esteem.
- 8 Maintain healthy sleep routines.** The blue light from screens interrupts sleep patterns. Avoid going online before bed and avoid having screen technology in bedrooms at night.
- 9 Stay safe online.** Keep personal information private. Use privacy settings and report or block offensive content. Remember people you meet online might not always be who they say they are.
- 10 Cyberbullying.** Try not to respond or retaliate, instead block the bully, save or make a note of the message (including time and date) and report it.

### Self-help links:

- [www.youngminds.org.uk/our-policies/social-media-guidance](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/our-policies/social-media-guidance)
- [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
- [www.themix.org.uk/search/social+media](http://www.themix.org.uk/search/social+media)
- [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)
- [www.respectme.org.uk/adults/online-bullying](http://www.respectme.org.uk/adults/online-bullying)

