



## SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH:

# Young Minds Under Pressure

The teenage years can be challenging, with pressure from peers, experiences of bullying, and academic expectations all influencing the mental well-being of youth. Social media perpetuates a culture that thrives with “likes” and a lack of such engagement can exacerbate feelings of stress, inadequacy and self-doubt already experienced by adolescents.

Social media and smartphones have given a new, more invasive level of access to most of us. We can effortlessly send texts, private messages, and share photos and videos. However, this accessibility has led to a new form of stress and bullying. Cyberbullies now exploit these platforms, sending hurtful messages and posting harmful content with ease. This covert approach makes it harder for victims to escape. Moreover, social media can at times, perpetuate unrealistic beauty standards, adding to the pressure young people face online.

In short, teenagers are more vulnerable than ever because they’re so easily accessible. And the consequences have been thoroughly researched and documented. The Pew Research Center conducted a survey in 2022 that found that 46% of teens between ages 13 and 17 experienced at least one of these six cyberbullying behaviors:

- Name-calling
- Spreading false rumors
- Receiving unsolicited explicit images
- Cyberstalking
- Threats
- Sharing explicit images without consent

These online bullying tactics take a great toll on these teens’ mental health. Studies show that adolescents who are cyberbullied are more likely to feel depressed, anxious, lonely, and/or suicidal. But that’s not all—the adolescents who are exhibiting cyberbullying behaviors are also experiencing mental health challenges. They’re more likely to be aggressive, delinquent, and engage in substance abuse.

Monitor your kids’ activities on social media and smart devices to help avoid undue stress and stop cyberbullying



### FOLLOW THE MOUSE:

We’ve hyperlinked resources you may want to access. Just hover and click!

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Continued from page 1

in its tracks. Encourage them to be responsible in their social media usage and teach them about what is and isn't appropriate to share online. And if you need additional support, connect with a therapist through [ComPsych EAP](#). Enter Web ID: **BCBSILEAP** to get access to mental healthcare and other support for your family!



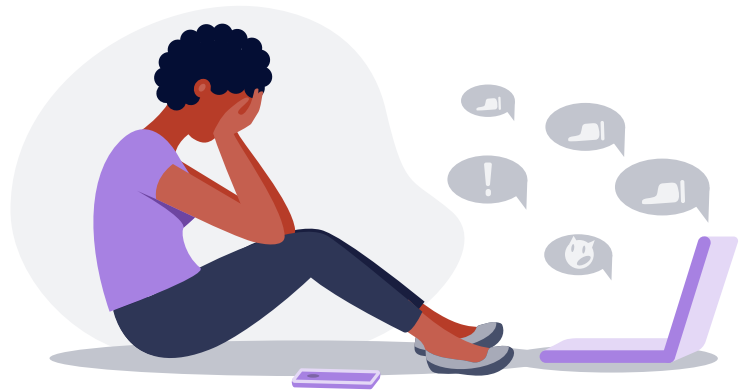
### 6 SIGNS OF CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying impacts teens' overall mental well-being. It can increase their risk for depression and anxiety, as well as reduce self-esteem and foster feelings of loneliness. Keep an eye out for these signs of online bullying in your teen so you can intervene:

1. Avoiding smartphone usage
2. Suddenly withdrawing from social media
3. Unwillingness to participate in activities outside of home
4. Decreased academic performance
5. Refusing to communicate
6. Changes in mood or affect



Learn more about cyberbullying signs and solutions from [Scholastic!](#)



*Cyberbullying impacts teens' overall mental well-being, and can reduce self-esteem and foster feelings of loneliness.*



*Participating in sports can teach your child about interpersonal relationships and working effectively in a group.*

## PULL THE PLUG ON CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is the newest evolution in bullying. The harm teens cause themselves and others through bullying behaviors has numerous consequences for their mental health and well-being. As a result, it's important for parents to do their part to prevent it.

Observe any changes in your teen's behavior that might indicate online distress. Prevention is key, so finding other ways for your teen to express themselves and spend their free time can help reduce the likelihood that they'll be cyberbullied. Here are some other activities you can encourage your child to participate in instead of social media:

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- **Join a sports team.** In addition to being a great way to get exercise and have fun, participating in sports can teach your child about interpersonal relationships and working effectively in a group
- **Get artsy.** Art is a great medium for self-expression. There are also many different types of art, so your teen will be able to explore the types of art they enjoy most
- **Start journaling.** Writing down feelings and reflections in a journal can help your teen work through their innermost thoughts and feelings. If they are more introverted, this can be a great outlet for them instead of creating content on social media
- **Spend time with friends and family face to face.** Sometimes teens use social media as a substitute for time spent with friends and family. Encourage your teen to post less about their day on social media and instead meet up for lunch with a friend or invite friends over to hang out. Then, they may be less inclined to spend that time on social media



SOURCES: [PewResearch.org](https://www.pewresearch.org), [NIH.gov](https://www.nih.gov), [Scholastic.com](https://www.scholastic.com)



## Join your myHealth Connections Community for the 2024 Cook County Health Fairs: myHealth Total Wellness

Take charge of your health for a healthier, happier total you! The 2024 Health Fairs offer resources and support for your mental, physical, and financial empowerment – plus exciting giveaways and more.

### On-site Health Fairs

#### TUESDAY, JUNE 4: 10 A.M. - 3 P.M.

JUVENILE TEMPORARY DETENTION CENTER  
AUDITORIUM  
1100 S. HAMILTON AVE.

#### THURSDAY, JUNE 11: 10 A.M. - 3 P.M.

COOK COUNTY BUILDING  
7TH FLOOR  
118 N. CLARK ST

#### THURSDAY, JUNE 6: 10 A.M. - 3 P.M.

STROGER HOSPITAL  
LOWER-LEVEL CAFETERIA  
1969 W. OGDEN AVE.

#### TUESDAY, JUNE 13: 10 A.M. - 3 P.M.

CRIMINAL COURTHOUSE  
2ND FLOOR CAFETERIA  
2650 S. CALIFORNIA AVE.

### Virtual Health Fairs

#### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5:

11 A.M.-11:45 A.M.  
2 P.M.-2:45 P.M.

#### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12

11 A.M.-11:45 A.M.  
2 P.M.-2:45 P.M.