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# Workshop

Training pupils for positive social media use: What are we doing and what can we do?

Workshop Leaders:

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# Social Media & Mental Health



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**Social media increasingly damaging young people's mental health**

# Beatrice - Benefits to social media use



- Communicating with friends online can strengthen friendships (Williams, 2019).
- For children (who have far less autonomy than adults) communicating online reduces the physical barriers of managing their friendships (Chen & Li, 2017; Su & Chan, 2017).
- Bridging offline can be difficult to navigate and anxiety inducing; bridging online mitigates awkward encounters and can be more successful for introverted children (Mazzoni & Iannone, 2014; Schouten, Valkenburg & Peter, 2007 ).
- Bridging online can introduce children to new hobbies and interests (Livingstone, 2017).
- Children can explore potential idealistic selves and evaluate feedback (Burrow & Rainone, 2017).
- Children can play/explore online without revealing their true identity (Michikyan, Dennis, & Subrahmanyam, 2015).

# Beatrice - Risks to social media use



- Children may misjudge the trustworthiness of their online friends and over-disclose (Ashktorab & Vitak, 2016; Bazarova, 2012).
- Over-disclosing to online friends may increase cyberbullying victimisation and perpetration risks (Hayes et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2006).
- Children may be exposed to inappropriate content/contact (Livingstone & Smith, 2014).
- If the ideal self is heavily edited, positive feedback may make the child feel bad about the disparity (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006).
- Negative feedback to the real self can impair self-esteem and confidence (Wolniewicz et al, 2018).



Social media use in adolescence and young people had been linked to both **positive** and **negative** mental health and wellbeing outcomes.



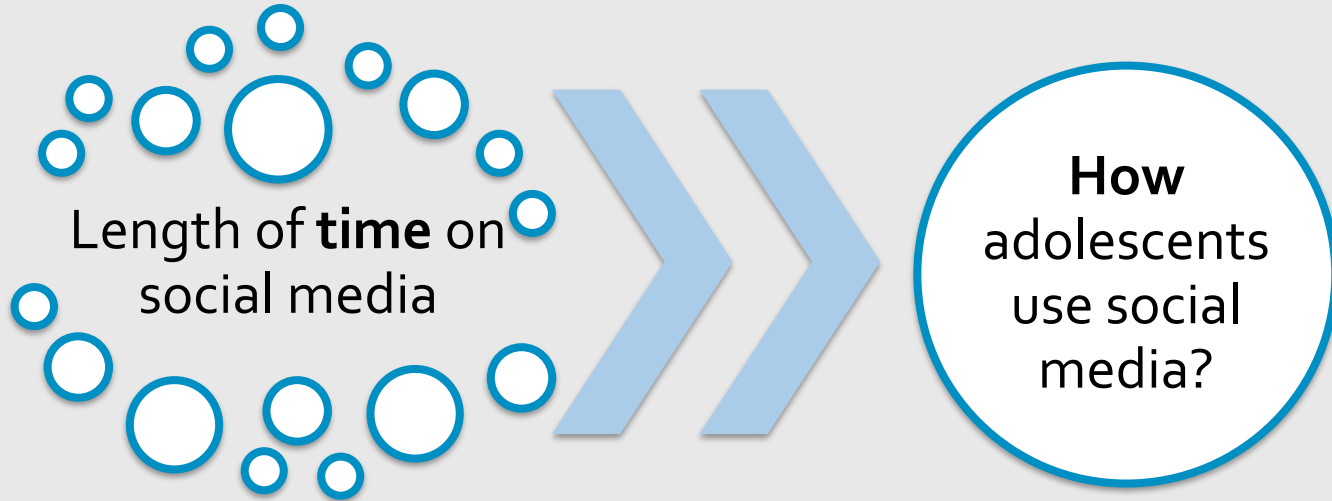
# Social Media, Mental Health & Wellbeing



Positive Impact	Negative Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase social capital</li><li>• Reduce loneliness</li><li>• Support seeking</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Depression &amp; Anxiety</li><li>• Social anxiety</li><li>• Low self esteem</li><li>• Social Comparison</li></ul>

(Chen & Li, 2017; Yang, 2016; Siddiqui & Singh, 2016)

(Keles et al., 2020; Day & Haimberg, 2021; Barthorpe et al., 2020; Nesi & Prinstein, 2015)



Longer time on social media leads to poorer mental health outcomes

Mental health outcomes depend on what young people do whilst on social media



**How**  
adolescents  
use social  
media?

Mental health  
outcomes depend on  
what young people do  
whilst on social media

## Active Social Media Use

- Liking, Commenting, Posting & Interacting with others online
- **Positive effect:** decrease in depression, increased social connectedness
- **Negative effect:** Links to perfectionism, body dissatisfaction

## Passive Social Media Use

- Browsing content and posts online
- **Negative effect:** Decrease in affective wellbeing, increases in anxiety and depression





**How**  
adolescents  
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Mental health  
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We want to encourage young  
people to utilise social media  
to **enhance the benefits** and  
**decrease the risks.**



**What benefits and risks of social media do you notice in your school/workplace?**



“Just as we require young people to be trained in order to get a driver’s license, our youth need instruction in the **safe** and **healthy** use of social media.”

Effects depend on what teens can do and see online, teens’ **preexisting strengths or vulnerabilities**, and the contexts in which they grow up.

Experiences are based on what young people **choose to see** (e.g. who they follow/like), and unknown or hidden **features of social media**

Age-appropriate use of social media should be based on **level of maturity** (e.g., self-regulation skills, intellectual development, comprehension of risks) and home environment.

# APA Recommendations



Should be encouraged to use functions that **create opportunities for social support**, online companionship, and emotional intimacy that can promote healthy socialisation.

Minimize adolescents' exposure to content that **depicts illegal or psychologically maladaptive behaviour**.

Minimize adolescents' exposure to online content that promotes **discrimination, prejudice, hate or cyberbullying**.

**Adult monitoring** is advised for most youths' (aged 10-14 years) social media use; autonomy may increase as kids age and if they **gain digital literacy skills**. However, monitoring should be balanced with youths' needs for privacy.

Functionality, and permissions/consenting should be **tailored to youths' developmental capabilities**; designs created for adults may not be appropriate for children.

# APA Recommendations



Monitor adolescents for signs of **problematic social media use** that can impair their ability to engage in daily routines and may present risk for more serious psychological harms.

Substantial **resources should be provided for continued scientific examination** of the positive and negative effects of social media on adolescent development.

The use of social media should be limited so as to **not interfere with adolescents' sleep** and physical activity.

Before using social media, adolescents should receive **social media literacy training** to ensure that users have developed psychologically-informed competencies and skills that will maximise the chances for **balanced, safe, and meaningful** social media use.

Adolescents should limit use of social media for **social comparison**, particularly around beauty- or appearance-related content.

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**What social media training do schools currently teach?**



**What is missing from this training?**





**How can research support schools in for upcoming changes to social media?**



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Thank you for listening! Any Questions?



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