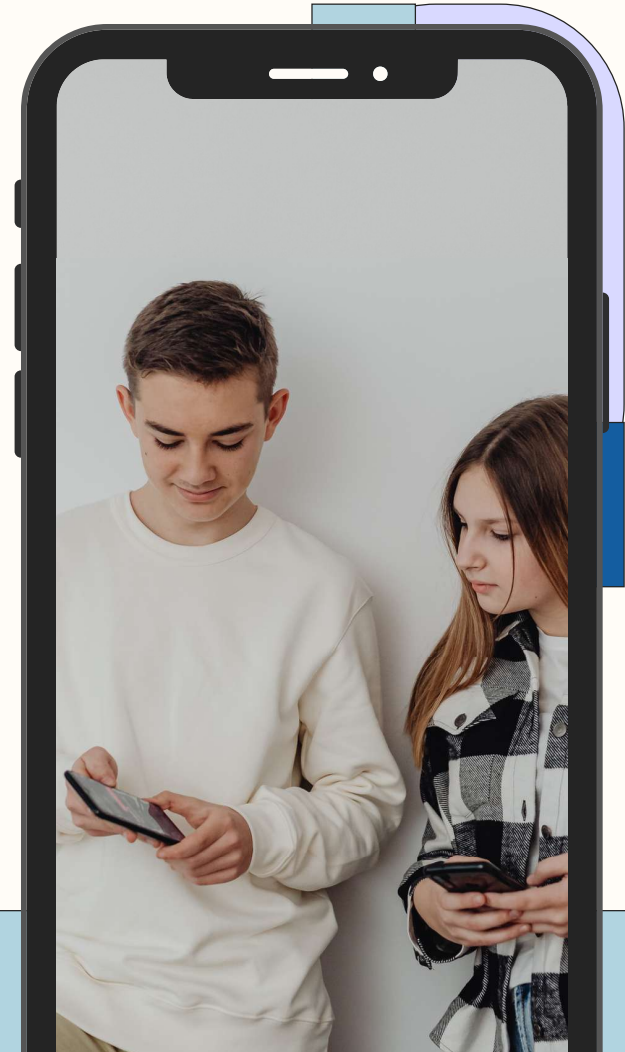


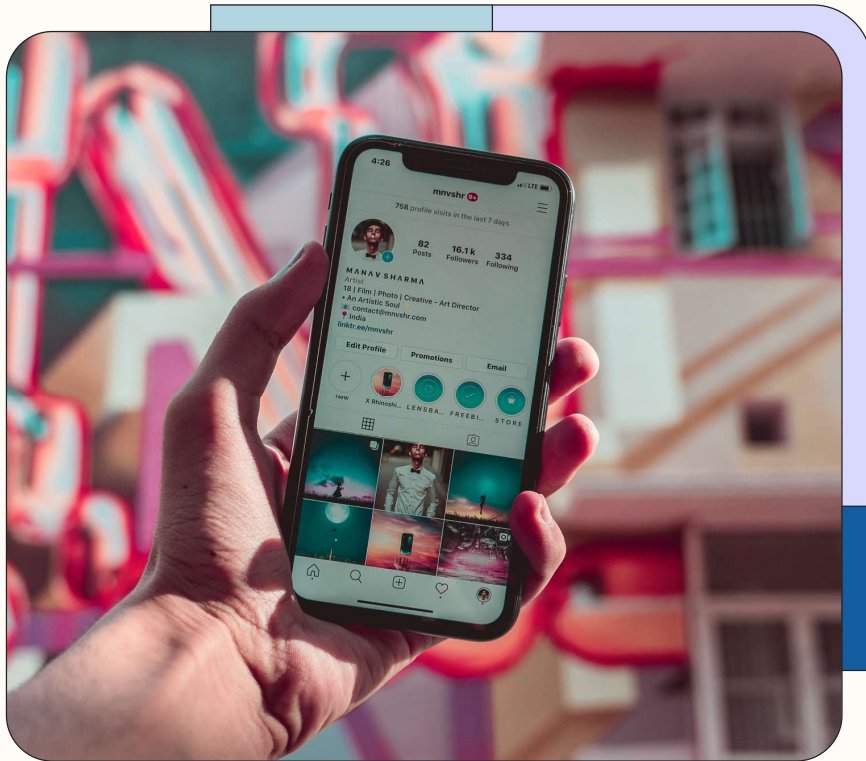


Workshop: Supporting young people with avoiding social media pitfalls



Gemma Rides, Prof. Dawn Watling & Prof. Helen Pote





Workshop Aims



- Challenge narratives around social media and mental health
- Explore the real impact of online life on young people
- Develop supportive, empowering responses—not social media bans
- Encourage collaboration between educators, parents, and researchers



Show of hands ●

Who here uses social media daily?

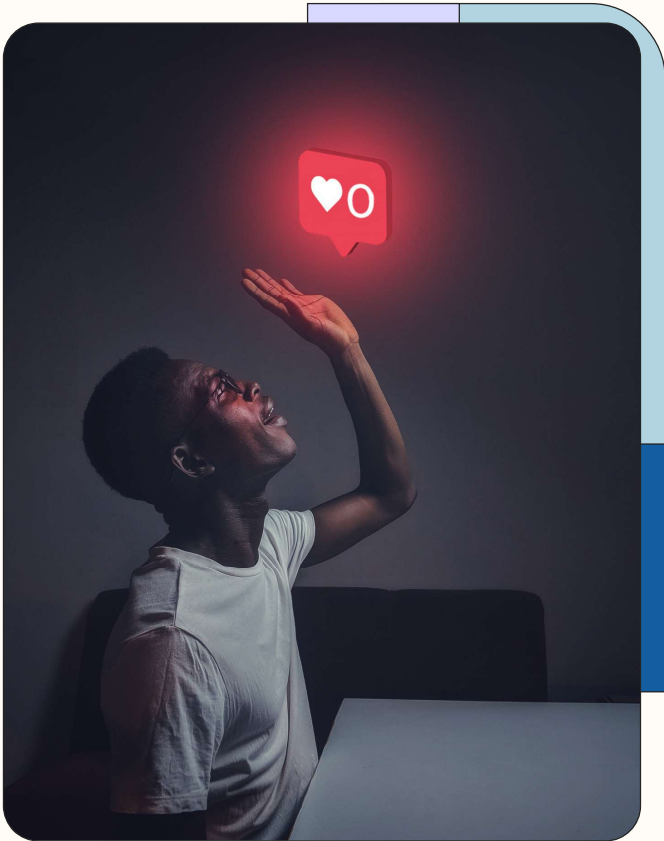
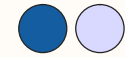
Who worries about its impact on young people?

Why is social media such a focus in youth mental health conversations?

What are you hearing in media, schools, or homes?



Current Social Media Context



98%

of 12–17-year-olds in
the UK use social media
(Ofcom, 2024)

50%

of children aged 3–12 use
at least one social media
app, despite age
restrictions

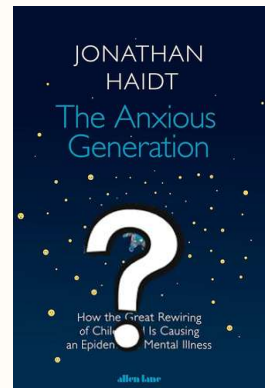
Current Social Media Context



Is social media the cause of the mental health crisis in young people?

Search Articles:

THE FRIGHTENING CONNECTION BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA AND MENTAL HEALTH



Home | War in Ukraine | Coronavirus | Climate | UK | World | Business | Politics | Tech | Science | Health

Technology

Social media damages teenagers' mental health, report says

itvNEWS | Your Area | Ukraine | Coronavirus | Politics | World | Climate | Royal

Social media increasingly damaging young people's mental health

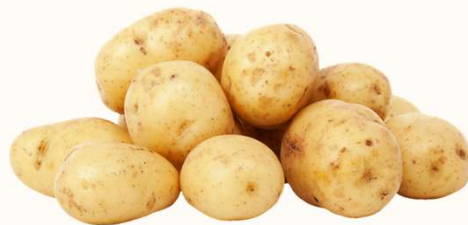
What do you think?



What the research says



- Large studies have shown little or no relationship between time spent on social media and mental health (Coyne et al., 2020; Ivie et al., 2020).
- The strength of this relationship is equal to the link between mental health and....





What the research says



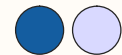
- Correlation \neq causation \rightarrow what else might explain the relationship?
- Pre-existing psychological distress.
- Behaviours online rather than time spent online.
- Motivations for using social media.

Social media also has benefits!

- 7 in 10 use to benefit their health and wellbeing
- Social connection and support
- Creativity, Enjoyment, Education (and more!)



What the research says



Current guidance for teachers

- Review of the evidence suggest gives suggestions for teachers in how to effectively use social media within the classroom (Van Den Beemt et al., 2019).
 - Improved learning outcomes in class
 - Increased motivation and engagement.

However, also indicated barriers to implementation (e.g., training), and highlighted mixed findings.

Useful resources at the Anna Freud website

<https://www.annafreud.org/resources/children-and-young-peoples-wellbeing/managing-social-media/>

Is a ban the answer?

Has your school banned phones?

What has worked in your setting?



Risks of over-restriction/ social media bans:

- Missing out on connection and support,
- Risk of unprepared exposure at 18.



Over to you!

In groups:

- What's already happening in your setting?
- What are the key challenges or concerns?
- What would work in your context?
- What kind of research or intervention would help?

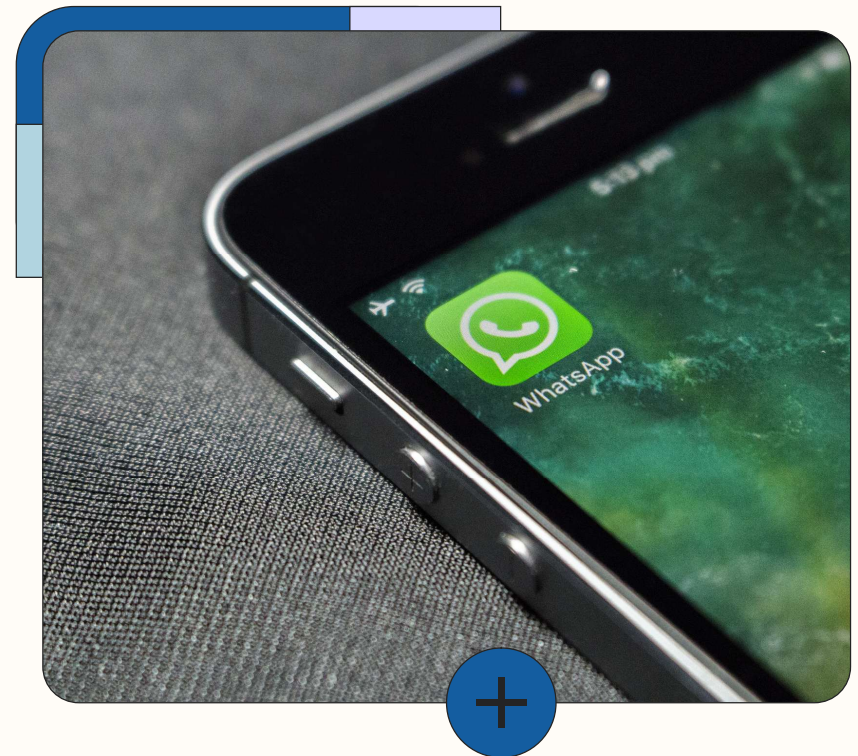
Worksheet to complete





Summary

- 💡 The relationship between social media and mental health is complex.
- 💡 Social media is a part of modern youth culture → banning ≠ protection
- 💡 Supporting **skills, reflection**, and **conversation** is more effective than restriction
- 💡 Collaboration between research and practice is key to supporting young people



Thank You



Interested in collaboration?

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<http://echoo.psychologyresearch.co.uk/>



ECHO-O LAB

