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#### **Disclosures-Fritsch**

I have no relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies.

#### **Goals & Objectives**

- Discuss the current (Sept 2025) state of digital technology and youth mental health
- Describe tools to assess and support discussions around screen time with pediatric patients and families
- Identify current touchpoints and strategies used for discussing social media use, screen time, and youth



ClipartMax, (2025)



# Cases to Ponder

- 8 yo for WCC, doesn't feel comfortable riding in car with parents because they text & drive, prefers grandparents, dinner time parents on screens, personal screen time Roblox
- 10 yo boy, proudly talks about his "71 subs" on YouTube Channel, and reported age as 23
- 12 yo socially anxious who passively views posts on Instagram and Tik Tok and feels less alone. Caregivers concerned and want guidance
- 13 yo 8<sup>th</sup> grade student, catfished to sharing naked photos, extorted to pay \$ not to have photos posted, at time \$ due, jumped off parking garage in suicide attempt
- 16 yo spending increasing time on screens, up to 6 hrs/school & 10 hrs/weekend days, rages when limits set, weight in dangerous range

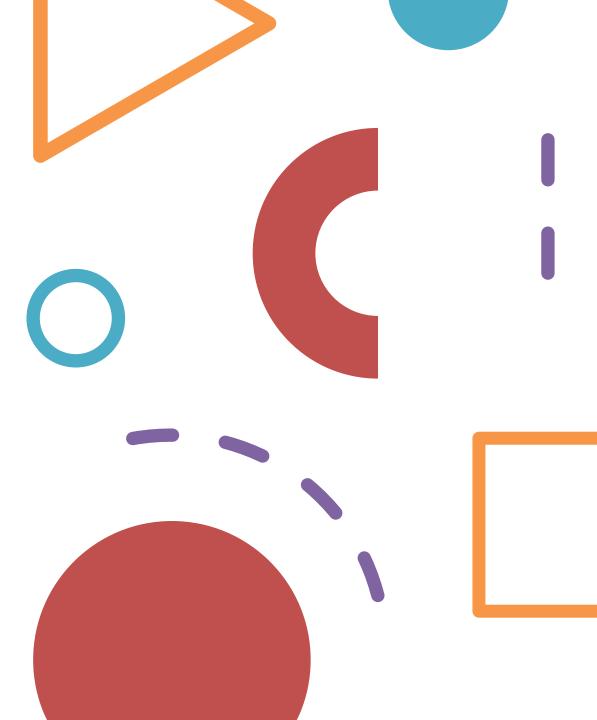
How do we, as providers, guide the families we treat?

How do we stay abreast with the youth who live immersed in this world?

How, as parents, do we help our children?

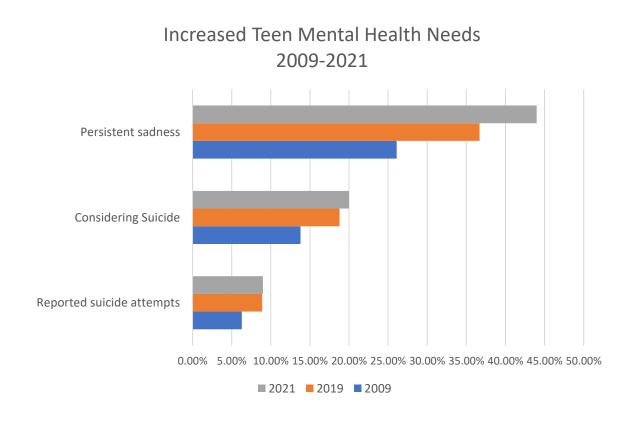
# Historical Perspective & Data

- 2005: 5% of world population on social media; 2023: 70% world population
- 97% of US school-age youth, all grades, use cell phones during school
- JAMA Pediatrics studied 13- 18 yos cell phone use by passive sensing revealed ½ of all adolescents average 66 minutes during school hours-up from a 2023 study of 43 minutes. ¼ of adolescents were on their cell phones > 2 hrs. *Top 5 sites: messaging, Instagram, video streaming, audio, and email* (now initiatives to limit cell phones/tablets in school)



#### Child Mental Health Pandemic Predated Covid-19 Pandemic

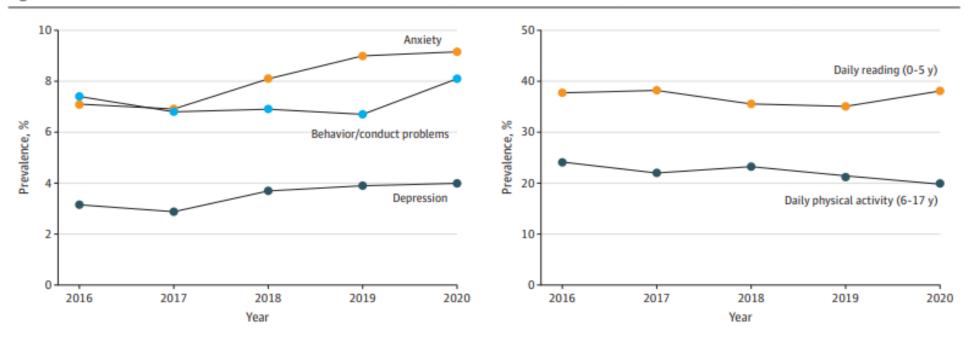
- Workforce Shortages
- Rising rates depression, anxiety, and suicide
- Limited training of pediatric primary care providers to assess & treat
- Impact of digital technology, increased screen time, healthy (or not) lifestyle?



Washington Post Article, 3/31/22, of CDC report

## Trends Reveal Opportunities

Figure 1. Trends in Selected Measures of Children's Health Conditions, Positive Health Behaviors, and Health Care Utilization, 2016-2020



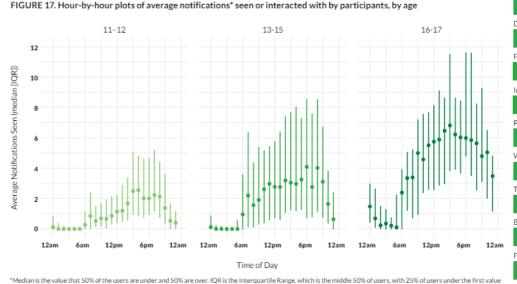
JAMA Pediatrics Published online March 14, 2022

## Common Sense Media: 2023 Constant Companion: A Week

in the Life of a Young Person's Smartphone Use

I might say that for certain apps, like TikTok, it's really hard to fall asleep once you use it close to when you're gonna go to sleep. I can't use it within an hour, or else I'd struggle ... and then I'll just get back on the app 'cause I'm not sleeping anyway.

-10th grader



and 25% of users over the second value. Dot shows the median value; line shows IQR

#### Under-13s regularly use social media and age-inappropriate apps

Of 85 participants who were younger than 13, 68% used social media apps, and they all used at least one app rated "Teen" or higher. Among 11- to 12-year-olds, the most popular social platforms were:

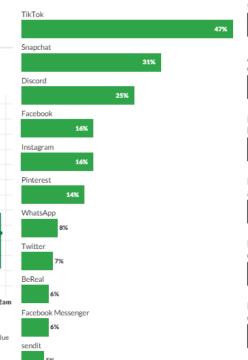


FIGURE 20. Self-reported technology management challenges of 203 11- to 17-year-olds

Do you find it difficult to stop using technology such as the internet or your mobile phone, once you start?



Are you short of sleep due to being on your phone or the internet late at night?



Do you neglect your daily obligations (school or family life) because you are using technology?



45%

53%

39%

16%

access the internet or check your mobile phone?



or get relief from negative feelings?



over going out with others?

31%



#### Some Recent Headlines/Articles

FIRST OPINION

Banning teens from social media won't help their mental health. Here's what might

By Jessica Schleider April 1, 2024

Social media firms 'monetising misery', says Molly Russell's father after inquest

Coroner finds harmful online content likely to have contributed to Molly's death 'in a more than minimal way'





More families sue Character.Al developer, alleging app played a role in teens' suicide and suicide attempt

0





#### Viewpoint

September 23, 2022

## Social Media and Medical Misinformation Confronting New Variants of an Old Problem

Dhruv Khullar, MD, MPP<sup>1,2</sup>

> Author Affiliations | Article Information

JAMA. Published online September 23, 2022. doi:10.1001/jama.2022.17191

#### U.S. Surgeon General Advisory-May 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE May 23, 2023 Contact: ASH Media 202-205-0143 ashmedia@hhs.gov

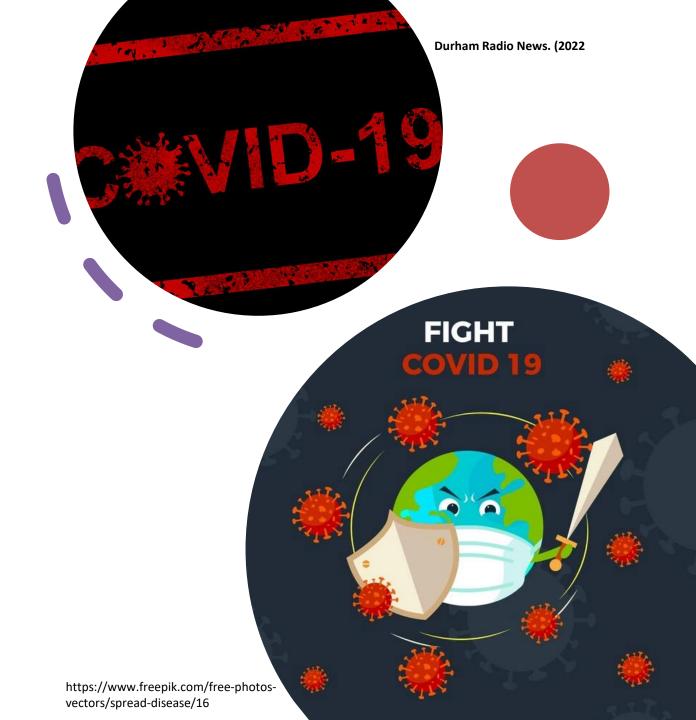
# Surgeon General Issues New Advisory About Effects Social Media Use Has on Youth Mental Health

Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy Urges Action to Ensure Social Media Environments are Healthy and Safe, as
Previously-Advised National Youth Mental Health Crisis Continues

Today, United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy released a new <u>Surgeon General's Advisory on Social Media</u> <u>and Youth Mental Health - PDF</u>. While social media may offer some benefits, there are ample indicators that social media can also pose a risk of harm to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents. Social media use by young people is nearly universal, with up to 95% of young people ages 13-17 reporting using a social media platform and more than a third saying they use social media "almost constantly."

# Post Covid-19 (#kidsanxiety...)

- Greatly increased screen time
- Increased access to information
- Studies slanted for negative findings
- "Active" vs "Passive" Screen
   Time
- Benefits



#### #kidsanxiety...

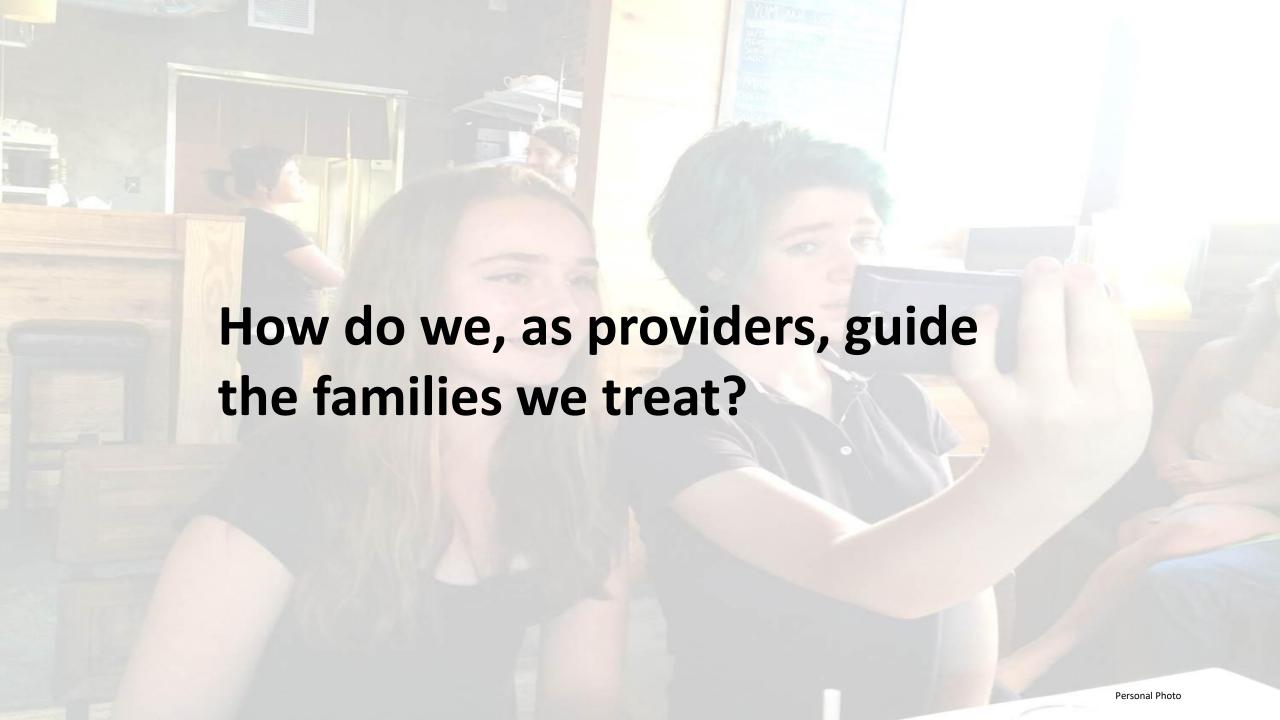
Table 1 Risk and benefits of online habits for youth with anxiety	
Risks for Developing Problematic Internet Use/Consequences of PIU	Benefits of Online Engagement
History of premorbid mental health concerns	Identity exploration and expression
Loneliness	Practice with self-disclosure
Shyness	Increased creativity
Preference for online social interactions	Augmenting real-world social relationships
Great need for social assurance	Access to health-related information
High levels of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)	Increased availability of mental health treatments
Use social media for more than 2 h daily	Destigmatizing mental health forums
Multiple social media accounts	Companionship for members of marginalized groups
Case Example 1: A 10-year-old with long history of anxiety; separation concerns, social phobia, generalized anxiety concerns has open access to constant news feed and recent mass shootings, COVID deaths, and natural disasters has led to further fears of leaving home and returning to school.	Case Example 1: A 13-year-old female adolescent always socially shy, able to connect with peers online to "practice" social conversations and engagement. Family monitors to ensure peers are "real peers", from school or extracurricular activities.

Glover J, Ariefdjohan M, *Fritsch S*, "#KidsAnxiety and the Digital World", *Child Psych Clin of NA*, 31(1):71-90. Available online, November 2021. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chc.2021.06.004

# ScienceDaily

New study reveals how teens thrive online: factors that shape digital success revealed Date: May 3, 2024

- Study, published April 13 in Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), investigates how adolescents perceive and engage with digital communication, including connectedness, positive social comparison, authentic self-presentation, civil participation and self-control.
- Interventions aimed at "digital flourishing"
  - Parental involvement of youth's digital life important
  - To increase digital flourishing, interventions aimed in assisting adolescents in their control over their digital communication and encourage parents to take an active role in their young adults' digital communication



Research

#### JAMA Pediatrics | Original Investigation

# Parental Technology Use in a Child's Presence and Health and Development in the Early Years A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

Marcelo Toledo-Vargas, BPhysio(Hons); Kar Hau Chong, PhD; Claudia I. Maddren, BPH(Hons); Steven J. Howard, PhD; Bradley Wakefield, PhD; Anthony D. Okely, EdD

JAMA Pediatr. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2025.0682 Published online May 5, 2025.

#### \*\*\*Of Note\*\*\*:

Casual observation of our outpatient waiting room, more than 98% of caregivers and youth in waiting room on screens and not communicating.

**IMPORTANCE** Parental technology use in a child's presence (hereafter, PTU), often referred to as technoference, is a growing concern in family dynamics, and no studies have quantitatively synthesized associations with children's health and development.

**OBJECTIVE** To systematically review and synthesize literature on associations between PTU in their child's presence and motor development, cognitive development, psychosocial health, physical activity, screen time, and sleep in early childhood.

conclusions and relevance Parents' use of technology in their child's presence was negatively associated with cognitive and psychosocial outcomes and screen time among young children, although the effect sizes were small. Further research focusing on potential impacts on physical activity, sleep, and motor skills is needed. Understanding these associations is crucial for informing research and guidelines aimed at minimizing the potential negative effects of this phenomenon on early childhood development.

#### **Promoting Digital Health; Conversations**

- Screen time recommendations; AAP
- Family screen time recommendations?
- Family "contracts" around screen time/"family media plan"?
- Family recommendations around "family time/outdoor activity"
- Tween/teen "media history"?
- Tween/teen as your teacher/guide

# Potential Tween/Teen Media History (unpublished)

#### For tweens/teens (some examples)

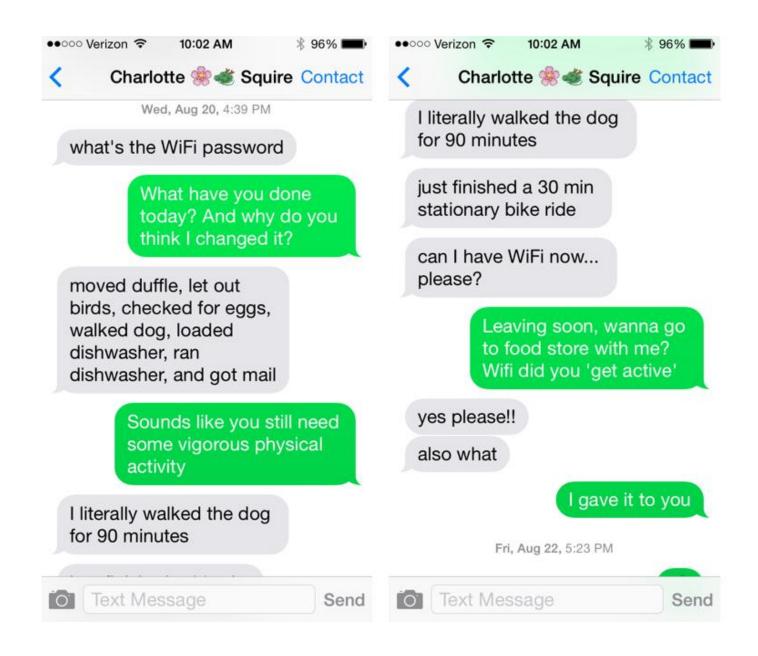
- What are the rules at your house about screen time and media use?
- How many hours a day of screen time do you use?
- What social media sites do you use? (ie Facebook (Meta), Twitter (X), Instagram, TikTok, etc)
- Do you connect with strangers? Have you arranged to meet an online friend offline/in person?
- Do you have privacy settings turned on? (for various apps)
- Do you text & drive? Do your friends text & drive?

#### For families (some examples)

- What are the rules at your house about screen time and media use?
- Do you have any concerns about your child's media use?
- How do you (parents) use social media or cell phones at home?
- Do you eat dinner together? What are the rules about screen time use during meals?
- Do you text and drive?

#### Promote Healthy Living

- Screen time & place of use
- Sleep
- Getting outdoors
- Exercise



## Honor Positive's & Develop Strategies for Negative's



Some youth utilize digital resources/social media to practice social skills



Some youth utilize web to seek answers to delicate questions



How to support those who's use increases risk?
Strategies to treat PIU?

#### Case study-- Screen Time and Anxiety

- Youth with anxiety may be particularly vulnerable to unhealthy digital habits
- Phones and online apps provide a means to avoid engaging with feared situations (e.g., schoolwork, socializing, being apart from caregivers)



Here & Now Medical Management Team. (2025)

Creating "social lives" with no in-person socialization

#### "Damian"

- 15 yo cisgender male Anxiety IOP patient
- Primary diagnosis of social anxiety disorder
- Chronic school refusal
- Socially isolated, depressed
- Sedentary hobbies/interests
- 10+ hours daily screen time (video games, YouTube scrolling, Snapchat), often into the late night
- "I don't want to meet people in person, I'd rather just have online friends."

#### "Damian"

- How did we work to empower parents to create reasonable limits?
  - Recalibrated family norms- digital access is not a birthright
  - Educated them about how to better control access (app limits, wifitiming)
  - Discussed video game and phone limits that were consistent with family's values
  - Parents needed to model their own modified digital habits (no phones during meals or after 9pm, reduced TV time)

## Ways to Spur Discussion

- How do you currently use screens and social media (e.g, for entertainment, connection with others, etc.)?
- Are there ever times when you feel like you are using it too much?
- When you are feeling anxious, how does it impact your use of your phone/social media?
- When you connect with a friend or family member on your phone is it as satisfying as doing so in person?
- How would it look for you to use technology to make your life better? How would it look for you to use it to avoid something hard?
- Share one way technology is helping you to live consistently with your values.
- Share one way in which your use of technology is leading you away from your values.

#### Desired Outcomes for "Damian"

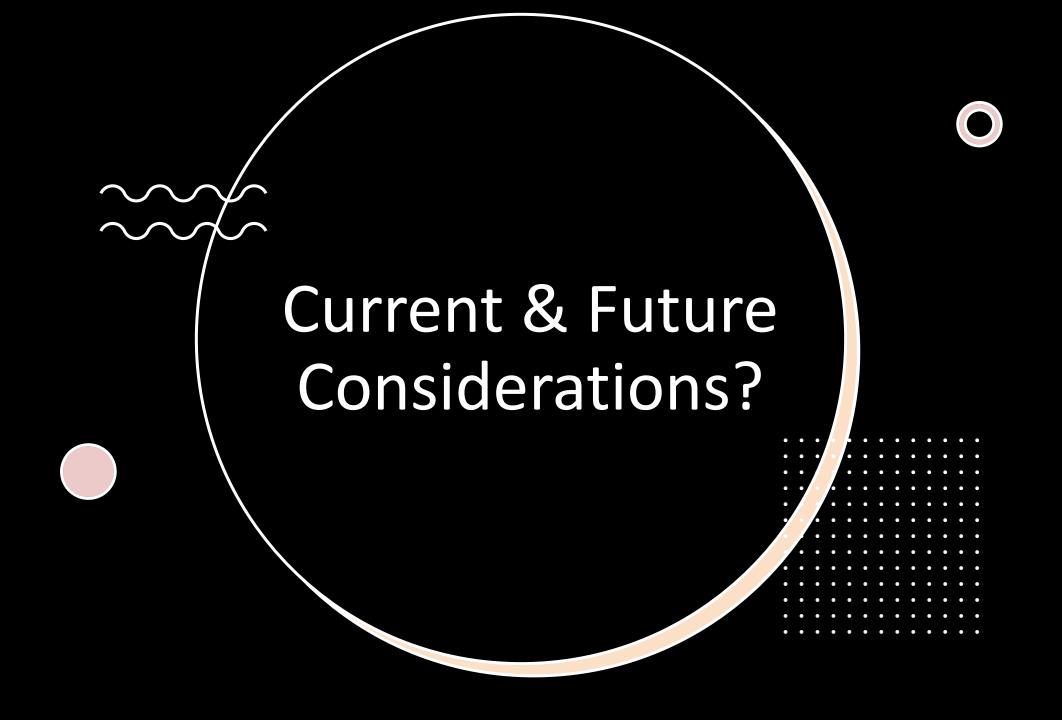
- Video game and phone access dependent on school attendance
- Improved school attendance with lessening pushback on house rules/cutoff times
- Circadian shift back toward more reasonable sleep/wake cycle
- Increasing physical activity
- Increasing in-person interactions, pursuit of in-person or hybrid friendships, and joining of in-person clubs/activities

**2024 AACAP Annual Meeting** Workshop: Family-Based Motivational Interviewing for Problematic Digital Media Use

Digital "addictions" current tx based on SUD tx: CBT, contingency management, family therapy, and motivational interviewing (MI)

MI as a guide to join with patient & family, id goals and motivations

Important to have family system values, habits, strengths part of discussion/considerations



# Role of Digital Technology in Mental Health Assessments & Treatments?

- App-Based Care?
- Virtual Reality for Exposures?
- Video Game Treatments?
- Coaching/Texting/Supports?
- Promoting getting out & connecting?
- Al to support care?



## Apps to Support "Mental Health" (no treatment trials)

Calm: ages 7+, meditation & relaxation Calm



Three Good Things: ages 7+, happiness journal



Stop, Breathe & Think: ages 10+, meditation & compassion



Calm Harm: ages 13+, Manages Self Harm



My3 Support Network: ages 13+, plan to stop SI/thoughts



Wysa: AI Coach CBT DBT chatbot: ages 15+



#### Beginning "Evidence"

**Original Investigation | Psychiatry** 

May 16, 2024

Effectiveness of a Web-Based Cognitive Behavioral Self-Help Intervention for Binge Eating Disorder

#### Welcome to Project YES!

Youth Empowerment & Support



kind to yourself

and why it matters.

power to change in

ways that matter.

Learn how to take action and manage your mood.



Build strength in the face of minority stress [16870+ focused]

Click HERE to start Project YES! free, anonymous mental health tools for teens

Need HELP now? Click HERE for more!

Project YES (Youth Empowerment & Support) offers free, anonymous, brief, self-guided mental health tools for teens. YES empowers teens to learn new ways of dealing with stress while helping others do the same.

Project YES was designed with teens (ages 11-17) in mind, but people of all ages are welcome to try the tools in Project YES, anywhere and anytime.

#### **Examples of Digital Therapeutics in Mental Health**

- •reSET-O: Prescription digital therapeutic for opioid use disorder, delivering CBT through a mobile app.
- •SleepioRx: Treats chronic insomnia using CBT techniques to improve sleep patterns.
- •DaylightRx: Provides CBT-based tools for managing generalized anxiety disorder.
- •EndeavorRx: FDA-approved for ADHD treatment in children, using a video game interface.
- •Freespira: At-home treatment for anxiety and panic disorders using breathing exercises.
- •Modia: Web-based CBT for opioid use disorder, used alongside medication-assisted treatment.
- •NightWare: Reduces sleep disturbances related to nightmares, using an Apple Watch to monitor heart rate and movement.

There are also concerns around digital health tech...





who has access to my electronic health records and personal data?



is digital health tech properly researched and evaluated?





# Emerging mHealth Possibilities

- Apps/Texting to prompt tx adherence
  - MEMOTEXT
- Apps to create community of support
  - FOCUS
  - Community & Safety Planning

## Virtual Reality Tools

- CHCO virtual therapy dogs
- <u>"Booger Blaster"- physical therapy</u>
- Programmed for exposures to anxiety triggers
- PTSD



Gaming Technology Program



#### What Can we Do?

Stay curious

- Rapid changes
- Kids are smarter about this

Social media history part of ongoing care

Assess youth and family

#### Resources

- Common Sense Media: commonsensemedia.org
- AAP Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health
- HealthyChildren (AAP): <u>healthychildren.org</u>
- Children and Screens: <u>Parenting Tip Sheets</u>; <u>Youth Anxiety</u>, <u>Depression & Digital Media</u>
- AACAP Facts for Families: Screen Time & Children
- AACAP Facts for Families: Social Media & Teens
- AACAP Screen Media Resource Center
- U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory: <u>Social Media & Youth Mental Health</u>
- <u>The App Evaluation Model by the American Psychiatric Association</u>: Evaluates mental health apps for ease of use, privacy and safety, clinical foundation, and therapeutic benefits.

## Let's Talk



Versus



Al Emoji Generator

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