


**NEW Solutions CIC**

**Parenting a Digital Generation**

Grange Primary School  
18<sup>th</sup> September 2019

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**The Silent Tragedy**

- **1 in 5 children have mental health problems**
  - **43% increase in ADHD**
  - **37% increase in teen depression**
- **100% increase in suicide rate in kids 10-14 years old**



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**What does research say about social media and mental health?**

2018 Royal College of Psychiatrists held a debate for young people about social media, there were differing views!

**One young person held up his smartphone and stated “This is my heroin - it’s the heroin of our generation”**

**IN CONTRAST**

**Another young person argued “I don’t agree – this is my lifeline, I am a looked after child, living on my own, and it’s the only way I have of keeping in touch with my family and friends”.**



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**What does research say about social media and mental health?**

Over the past few years psychologists have begun to look at the effects of social media/gaming on mental wellbeing and a consistent finding of much of this research is that *the heavy use of social media is associated with poorer mental health.*




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**What does research say about social media and mental health?**

**Internet usage can impact on brain functioning and cognitive development**




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**3 main factors why the overuse of social media can negatively impact mental health**

- **Impact on Sleep**
- **Use as life “comparison” tool**
- **Chasing likes on post to drive self-worth / self-esteem**



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## Impact on Sleep

Heavy usage can have a negative impact on physical well being which in turn can affect mental health. This is particularly relevant when it comes to sleep disturbance. Several studies have linked sleep difficulties to screen time.



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## Use as “comparison” tool

While social media was initially set up as a means of connecting with others it is now also used as a means of comparing. It has become a barometer of how we measure up to others and this is a particular issue for young people who are socialised through the school system to ‘measure’ themselves in relation to their peers.



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## Use as “comparison” tool

As a consequence, many of the studies in this area suggest that we are increasingly engaging in “passive use” of social media- this is where we look at other peoples pictures and lives and compare them to our own- and it is bad for our mental health.



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## Use as “comparison” tool

The nature of social media is such that most people present the highlights of their lives more regularly than the boring stuff so these highlights appear to be the norm  
This can impact mental well being making one feel inferior and inadequate.



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## Chasing likes on posts to endorse self-worth / self-esteem

Validation by “LIKES and REPOSTS” has become currency of our culture, which impacts significantly on mental health.

Being too active on Social media and worrying about regularly posting pictures and status updates has been linked to anxiety, poor body image and diminished mental health.



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## Chasing likes on posts to endorse self-worth / self-esteem

Constant posting can mean being on receiving end of negative and cruel comments. Potentially leading to more at risk of being cyber bullied which has been linked to serious depression and even suicidal behaviour in extreme cases.



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## APP AWARE?

- Know about the apps and games your children are accessing online. (be clear about phone/online house rules from the start, don't wait on an "issue" arising.)
- Ask your child to "educate" you with any new information/Apps and how they stay safe online.
- Ensure your child is aware of what to do if/when they see any online content that they are uncomfortable with.

**10 APPS TEENS ARE USING THAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW**

FOR MORE INFO: APPSOLUTELYRIP.COM

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## Risks vs Benefits

- Distraction from "real-time" relationships.
- Impact on educational, social performance.
- Contribution to impact on mental health issues – Anxiety, depression, self-esteem and sense of worth.
- Sexting, bullying (cyberbullying) online, general online risks.

- CONNECTION...friends....?
- Access to information regarding local/global issues.
- Being able to contribute, be involved in and influence issues that young people feel are important. Citizenship.
- Young people can feel more confident in themselves when communicating online.
- It can be good fun.

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## Talking to children about the pros & cons of social media

There are of course many benefits to social media. As parents it's important that we discuss with our kids the importance of using Social Media and gaming in a healthy way.

We need to talk about how it has the potential to effect sleep and therefore their health and through that help them make more informed choices about when to 'switch off' at night.

We need to be talking about "UPGRADE BETWEEN OUR EARS", clarity and communication about the online world.

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## Cyber Bullying?

**Cyberbullying/online bullying:**

- excluding a child from online games, activities or friendship groups
- sending threatening, upsetting or abusive messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing or malicious images or videos
- 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name.

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## Prevention and preparation

**Preventing bullying**

- It's important for organisations that work with children to create a culture where children feel they can tell someone if they have a problem and where it is clearly communicated that bullying will not be tolerated.

**This might include:**

- talking to young people about healthy relationships to help create positive social norms and challenge unhealthy behaviours
- promoting sources of help and information such as [Childline](http://Childline.org.uk) so children know where to go to get help if they don't feel able to talk to any of the adults working with them.

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## Useful Links and Resources

Digital Parenting Magazine

<https://parentzone.org.uk/digital-parenting-online-safety-magazine-archive>  
 Think You Know - <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>  
 NSPCC & O2 - <https://www.o2.co.uk/help/pscc/online-issues>  
 Zip It - App - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCgK9gYfV90>  
 Child Exploitation and Online Protection command (CEOP) - <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre>  
 O2 & NSPCC NetAware - <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>  
 UK Safer Internet Centre - <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>  
 Internet matters.org - <https://www.internetmatters.org/>  
 Respect Me - <https://respectme.org.uk/resources/videos/>  
 Anti-Bullying Alliance - <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

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