



Parenting in the Digital Age


Cori Cross, MD, FAAP

Cypress-Fairbanks ISD

November 12, 2024



Faculty Disclosure



I **have no** relevant financial relationships with the manufacturers of any commercial products or providers of commercial services discussed in this presentation.

I **do not** intend to discuss an unapproved or investigative use of any commercial products or devices in my presentation.

Goals for Today's Talk

1. Provide action-oriented, positive and hopeful advice that is:
 - Doable
 - Socio-economically and Culturally Sensitive
 - Child-Centered
 - A Value Add
2. Encourage parents to weave these topics into conversations they are already having with their children.

Flipping the Script

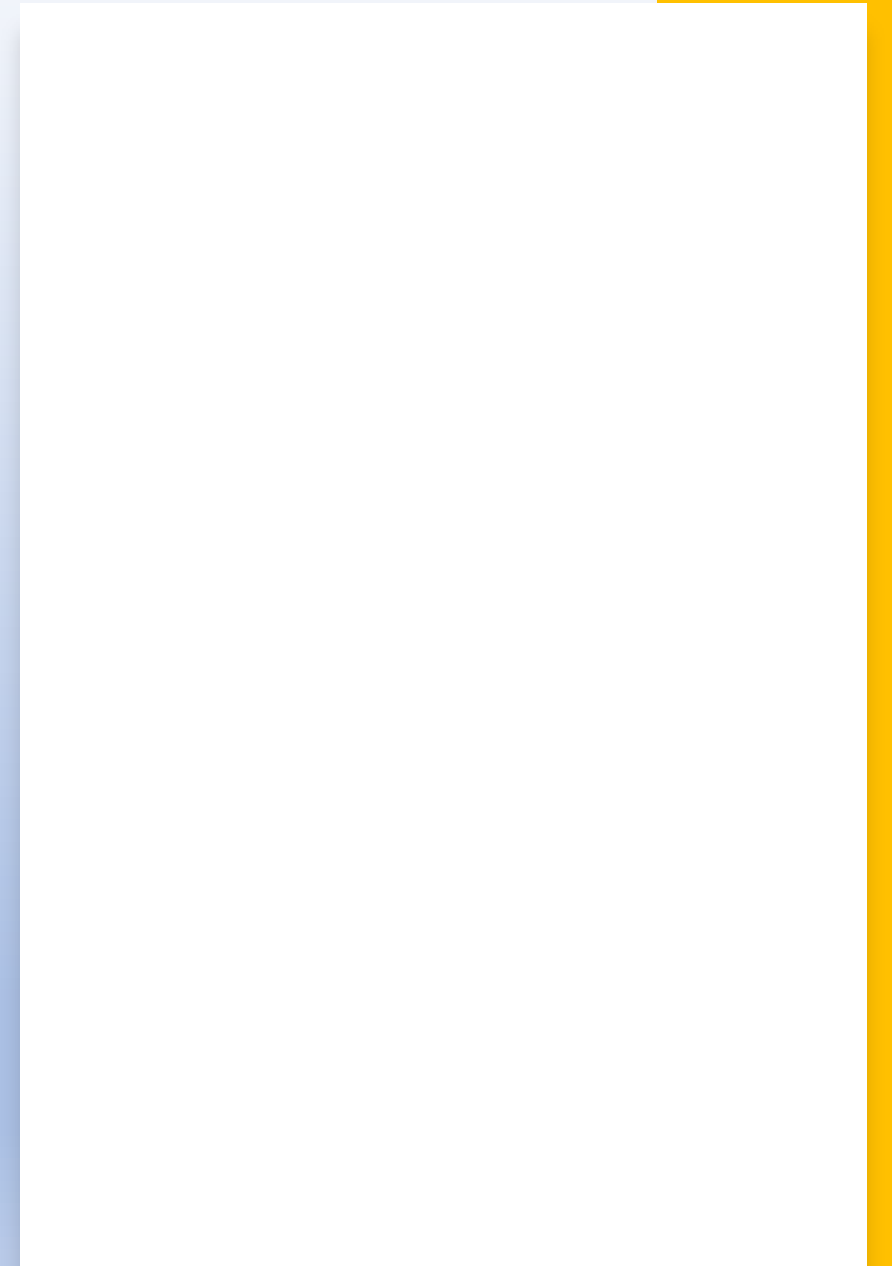
- Starting with Parents and THEIR screen-use and Social Media Behavior
- The person you have the most control over is you



Q: Does having a device present at the table influence interactions?

Q: Does parental device use effect how their children perceive interactions with their parents?

Q: If I am regularly on my device while interacting with my kids, does it really matter?



Mobile Device Use by Caregivers During Meals

- 30% didn't take out
- 73% had a device visible
- 44% used it continuously



Technoference

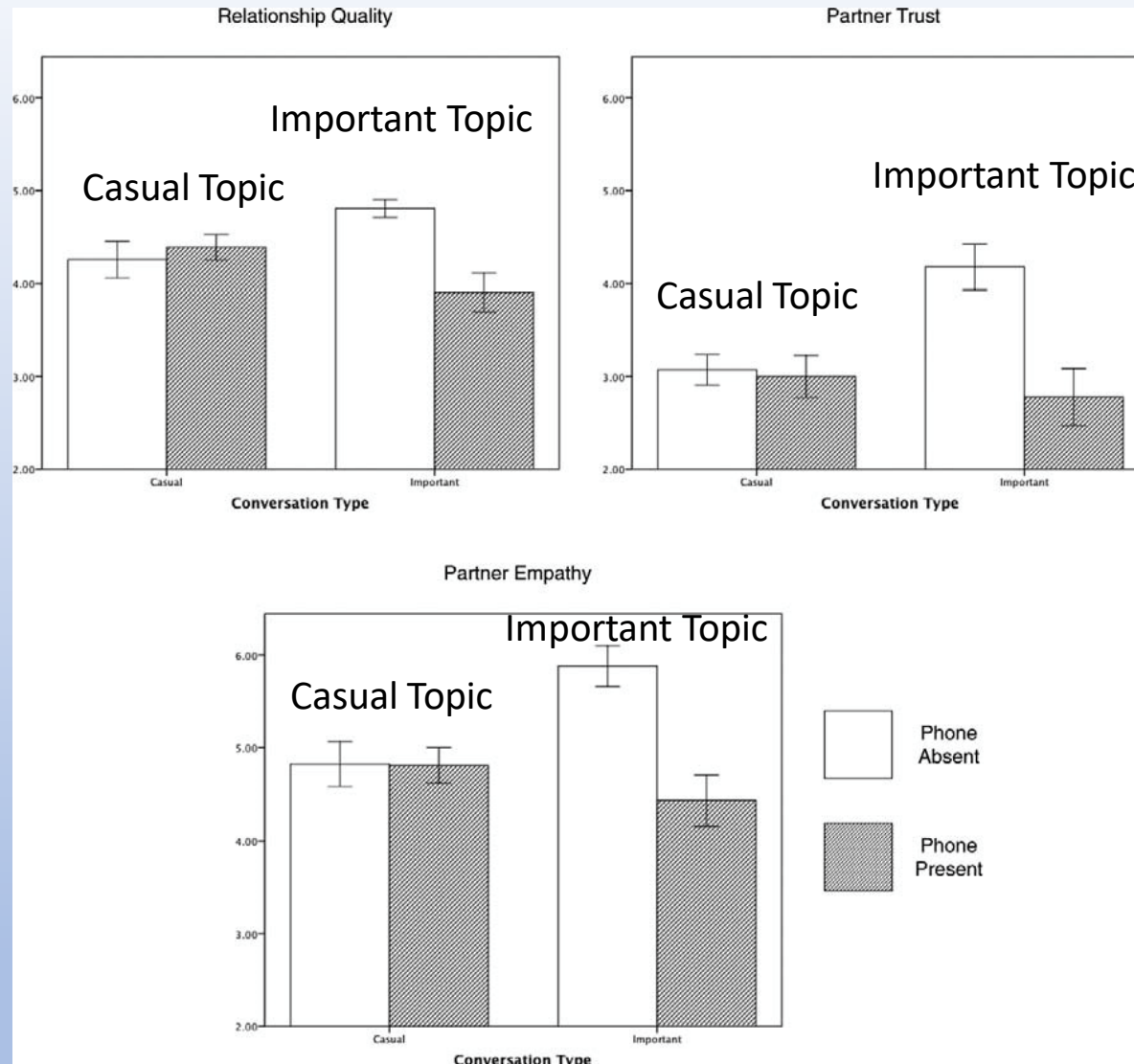
Children would act up to vie for attention.

Caregivers became more upset when children acted up while they used their device.

Behavior worse if parent was distracted by texting or swiping v. taking a phone call

Lots of caregivers took it out when they were done eating but children still eating -- to observer it seemed as if they were bored

Relationship Quality



Partner Trust

Partner Empathy

Advice: Keep All Family Meals Device Free

Simple to recommend & easy to implement

- The mere presence of a device can shape relationship quality in conversational settings -- negatively affecting closeness, connection, and conversation quality.
- This effect was most evident when individuals were discussing personally meaningful topics as opposed to casual topics.

Take home message:

- Devices **EVEN WHEN FACE DOWN FOR “EMERGENCIES,”** may mean kids don't discuss important topics.

The iPhone effect:

- What effects how connected we feel when interacting face-to-face w/someone?
Age? Gender? Ethnicity? Mood? . . .

The presence or absence of a mobile device had a larger effect than any of these.

- People who had conversations in the **absence of mobile devices** reported **higher levels of empathetic concern.**
- Whereas, in the **presence of a mobile device, (EVEN W/O Active Use)** subjects reported it **undermined the character and depth of these connections.**
- Individuals are more likely to miss subtle cues, facial expressions, changes in the tone of their conversation partner's voice, and have less eye contact.

Take Home Messaging: Parental Use Matters

- **Hopeful Messaging-** You can get a lot of mileage on changing **YOUR** behavior.
 - Encourage Parents to *be Intentional* about carving out time without a device.
 - Parents *model* good screen habits as well as screen-free habits
 - *Parental behavior sets the tone* for how children and teens will use devices.

In Office Complaint: Parents often worry about tweens and teens pulling away

- If you feel you are not connecting with your child, think about what they are getting from you.
 - **Are you putting your device away and making yourself available?**
 - **Are they able to feel heard and seen?**

Advice to Caregivers Regarding THEIR Screen Use

- Strive to have time with children be device-free.
- Be intentional about carving out device-free time when they are interacting with children.
- Be reflective of parental screen use and conscious of how it may be perceived by children. The presence of a device can decrease the perceived connection and intimacy of a moment. Children and teens are more likely to talk and share when they do not feel as if they are competing with a device.
- Model the behavior you would like your children to have. Parental behavior can set the tone for how children and teens will use devices. Encourage parents to model good screen use as well as screen-free habits.
- Be conscious of what you are sharing online regarding your children. Speak with them about what you are planning to share and be respectful of their opinion.
- Be aware of what message you may be sending to your child when you brag and publicize their success on social media. Reenforce that your love for them is not based on their accomplishments but in who they are. Posts about children can encourage a child's growth mindset by valuing persistence, dedication and embracing challenges or failures as opportunities.

Advice: Parents need to be intentional about their own device use especially when their children are present.

Carve out

Carve out device free time

Model

Model good screen use

Reflect

Be reflective of the message you are sending

Let's talk about kids and THEIR Device and Social Media Use

Re-framing the Conversation about Social Media and Youth Wellbeing

Family Media plans empower families, children & teens

- Public messaging that is fear/shame-based may get more engagement, but doesn't reflect the science and can make families feel hopeless
 - → Parents want to give up or tighten control
 - → Teens blame themselves



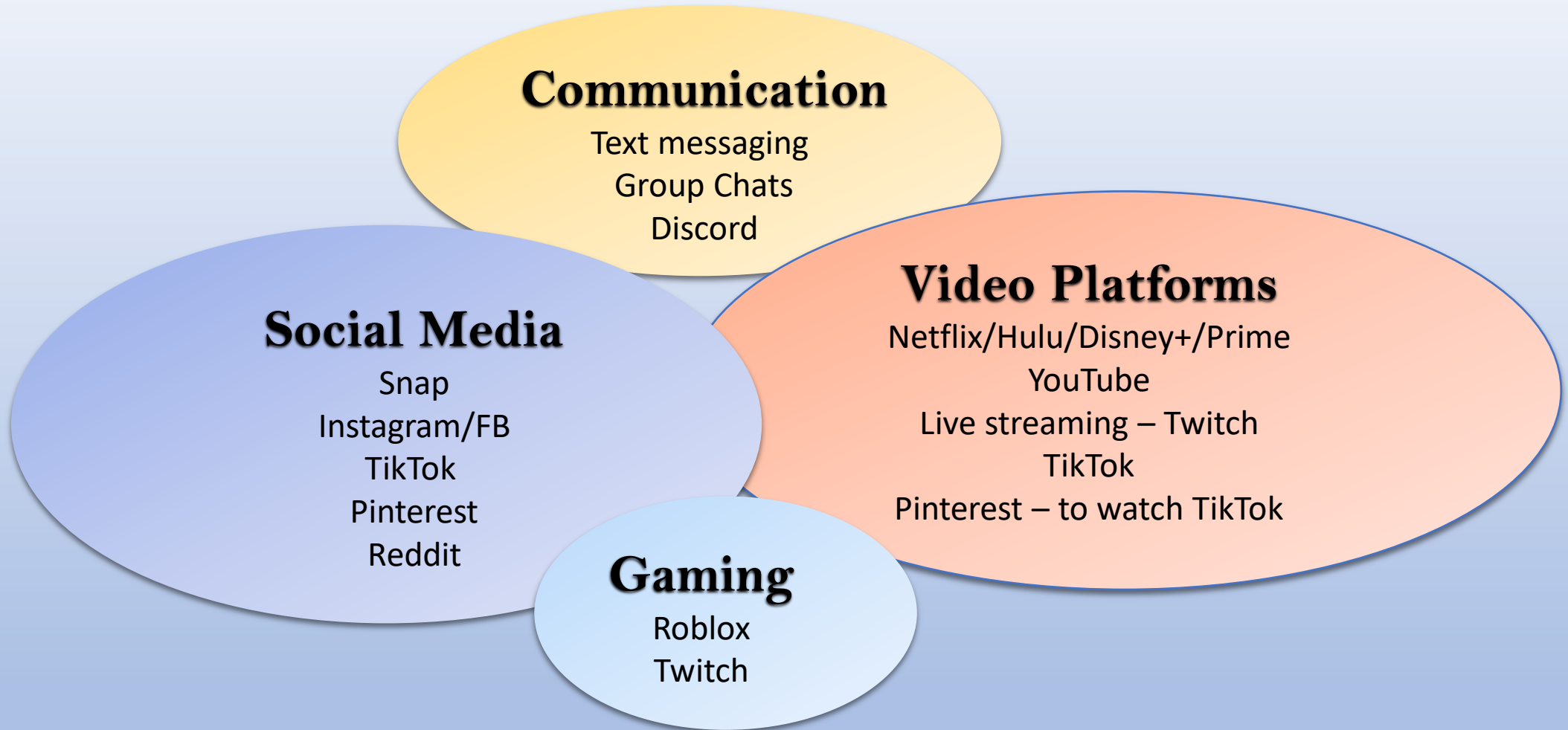
Social Media

- It's nuanced and complicated, but we still need to parent in this space
- Many parents don't feel confident parenting in this space
- The number of kids reporting feeling depressed and anxious is increasing - we can't ignore this trend.
- Social Media & Devices aren't everything – they're just a piece of the puzzle

Social Media – it is not a question of IF teens use it

Up to 95% of youth ages 13–17 report using a social media platform, with more than a third saying they use social media “almost constantly.”

When everything seems to be Social Media



Not clear-cut boxes and categories.

They morph into one another depending on how a particular user uses a particular platform.

Adolescents Use Social Media in Diverse Ways

- **Social:** Communicating with friends
Building networks based on interests
- **Functional:** Planning events
Engaging around school assignments
- **Emotional:** Seeking support
Relieving stress, boredom
- **Identity:** **Developmentally the work of adolescence = Identity and How You Fit into Society**
Exploring Sense of Self – Trying Different Versions of YOU
Seeing/Testing Reactions from Others - Omegle
Learning about Others
Feeling Understood and Finding a Community
- **Civic:** Getting involved in communities, in causes
Developmental norm, amplified exponentially by social media

Social Media isn't a just a pastime, it is weaved through an adolescent's life

Social Media and Individual Differences

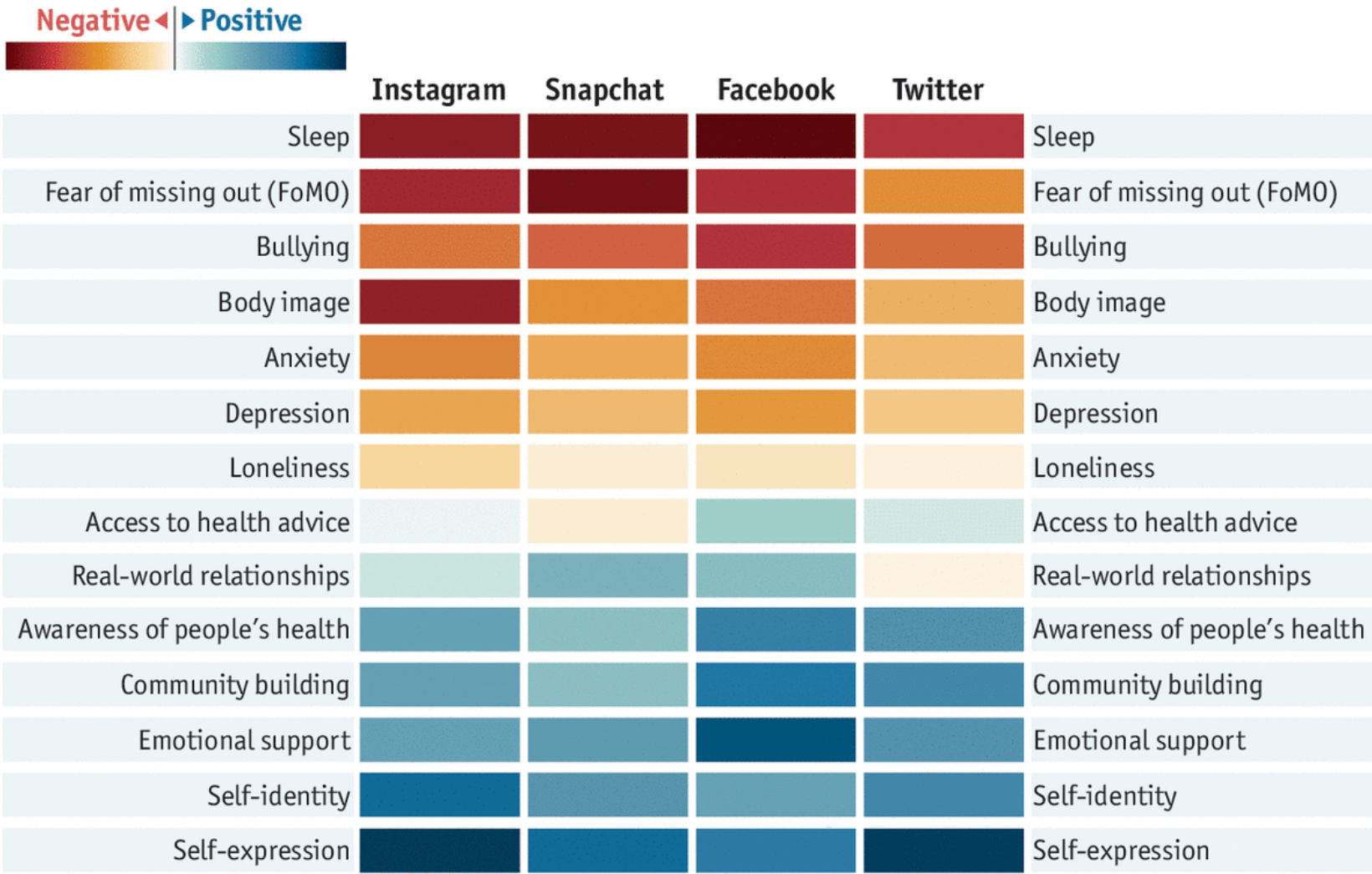
- Not every teen has the same risks or benefits of social media use
- ‘Screen time’ measures are imprecise.
 - 1 hour spent on social media can mean very different things to different users
- About 2/3 of adolescents do well across multiple areas of mental or physical health
- About 1/3 have potential mental health consequences, but often these adolescents have other aspects of their lives that put them at increased risk:
 - Existing mental health issues
 - A less supportive home environment (less connection to parents, more parent social media use)

Moreno MA, et al. *JMIR Pediatrics and Parenting*. 2022.

Coyne, S.M., et al., *Family*. 2022

It's Complicated

Britain, social media users, 14- to 24-years-old, reported impact on well-being, 2017



Source: Royal Society for Public Health

TEEN PERSPECTIVES:

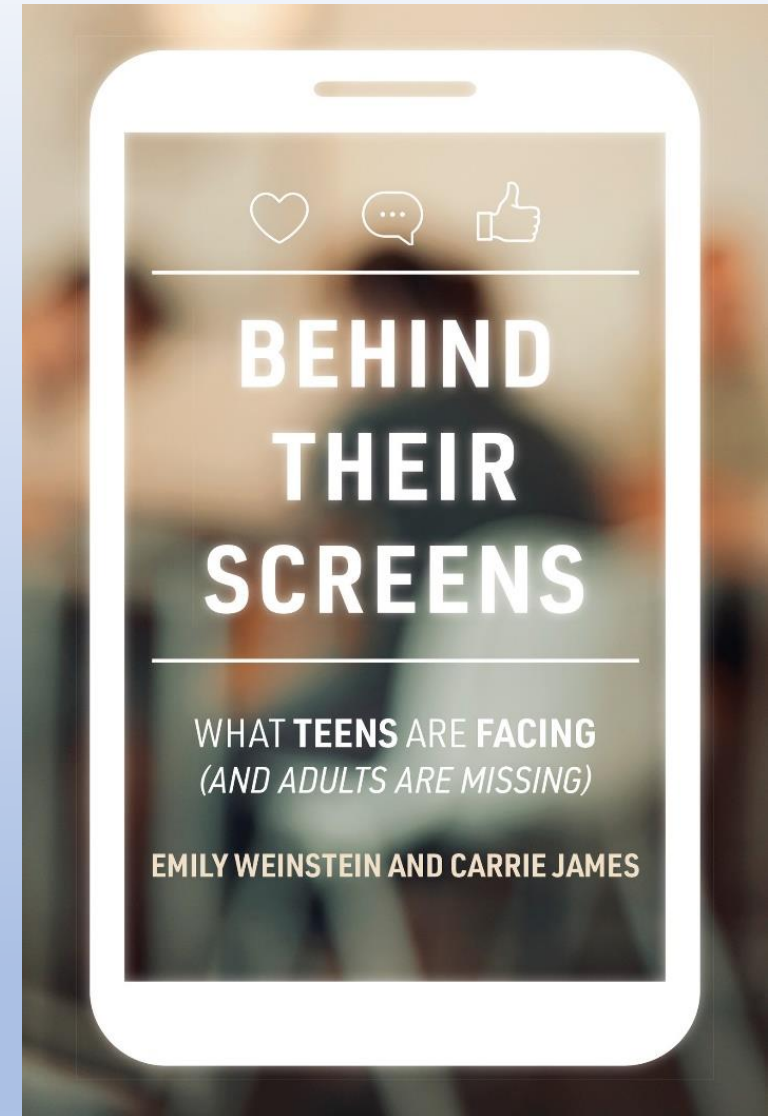
“Constant bombardment of content”

Feels like “a job” to manage notifications and updates

“You are constantly being alerted about everything, and it can be hard to focus.”

“They really need to block older people from stalking younger.”

“My parents tell me to put my [device] down and they immediately get back on their own phones”



Weinstein & James (2022). *Behind Their Screens*.

Common Sense Media (2023): What girls really think of social media

Social Media Conversation Starters

- How do you use social media?
- When you are on social media how do you feel?
- How does social media make you feel about yourself?
- What are two things you like best about social media and what are two things you like least?
- When you post on social media how do you feel about the responses you get?
- Do you feel pressured to post?
- Do you worry if your post will get enough likes or comments?
- Do you ever wish you could take a social media break?

Understanding the landscape

How do most Social Media Sites make money?

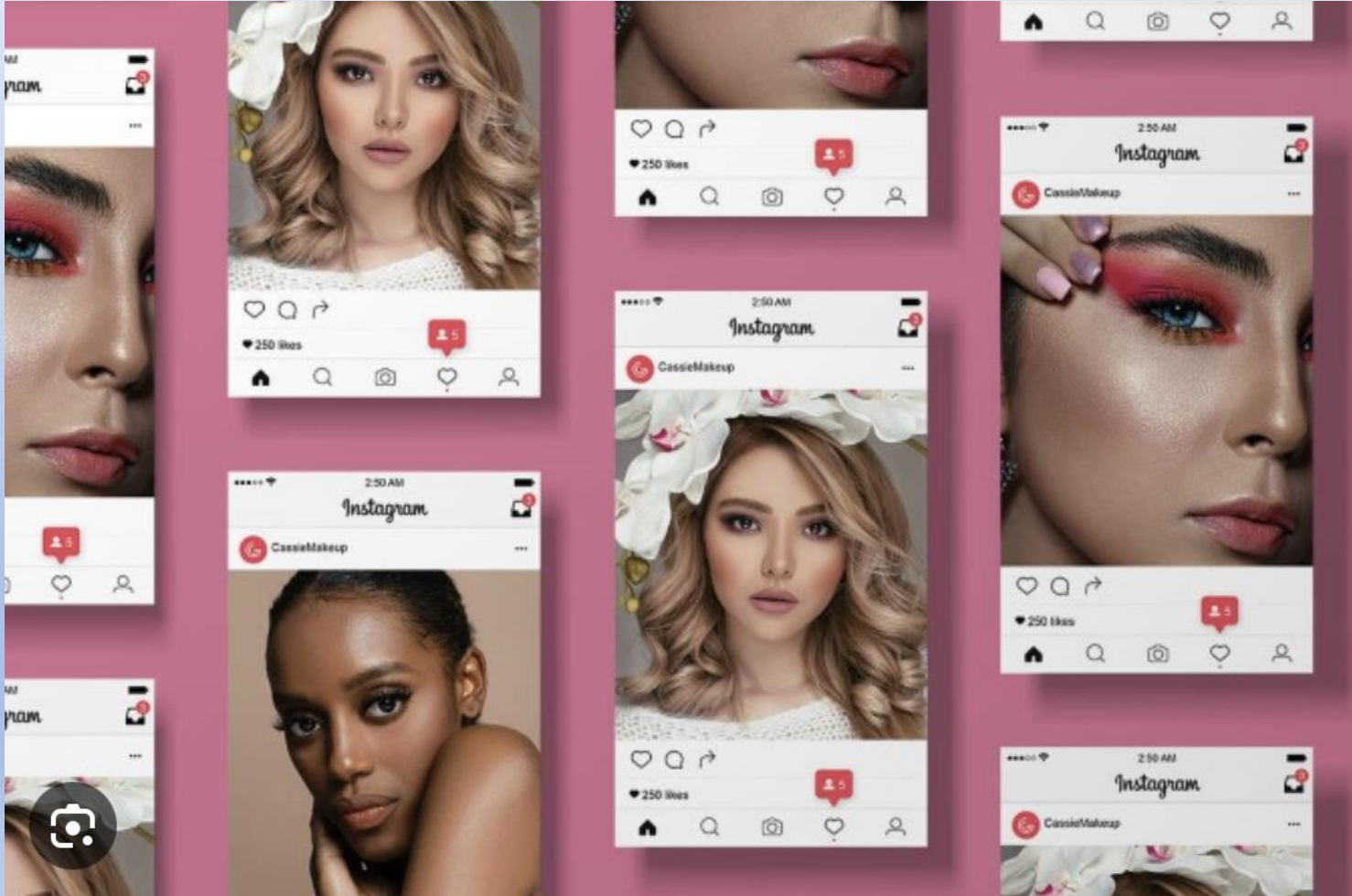
- Data and Time
- Time is money
- Data is a commodity

Industry *as it is set up now* is incentivized to

- keep kids on-line
- “feed” them ads and content



Ads are no longer just on TV or in a magazine. **Feeds are Ads**



The power of advertising

Methods marketers use to reach teens:

- **Exploiting insecurities:** Brands take advantage of teen vulnerabilities:
Desire to Fit In, To Be Seen as Attractive
Both *teen boys and girls* are highly susceptible to messages around body image. Marketers use this to their advantage.
- **Using Peer Influence on Social Media:** Advertisers actively enlist teen followers on social media to market products.
Many brands encourage teens to broadcast their interactions with brands
Uploading pics with a purse, drink, or outfit
- **Tracking data.** Allows companies to determine teens tastes, interests, purchase histories, preferences, and even their locations so they can market further products or sell that data to other companies.



These techniques reinforce the idea that brands "make" the person.

Methods marketers use to reach preteens:

- **The need for stimulation** - Tween brains crave -- and respond strongly to --stimulation.
If something is exciting, they take notice.
- **The desire to engage** - Brands bury their sales pitches to this age.
Preteens are swayed by experience
Brands use interactive gimmicks to attract and hold their attention.
- **The craving for emotional connection** - Tweens engage based on emotion.
They **LOVE** a specific dress. They **MUST HAVE** a particular song.
They're **OBSESSED** with a certain game.
Marketers use strategies that stir up emotions, so kids identify with a product.

Q: Is social media bad for my child?

- Social Media has many aspects - feeds, communication, sharing self-made content
How each individual user uses social media is unique to them.
- Social Media is a piece of the puzzle and can augment what is going on in a person's life
- Social media use can make you feel better or worse depending on the specifics of your situation

Questions we need to ask as Pediatricians and Parents:

- Who is this child?
- What are they going through?
- What does their feed look like?
- How are they using social media?

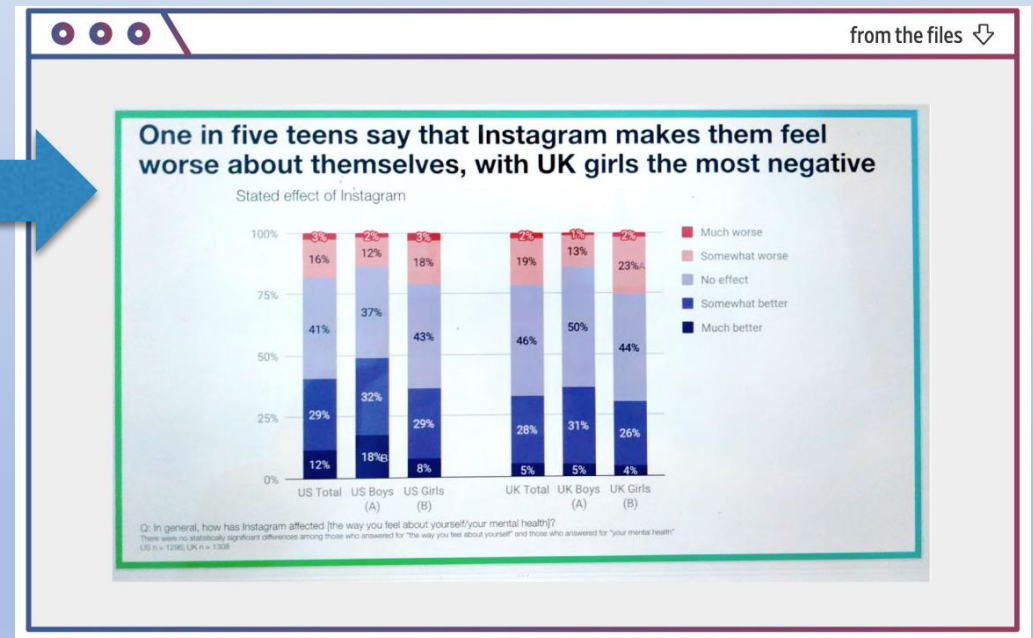
Social Media & Body Image – Control Your Feed

Tik Tok recommends body image or mental health video every 39 sec. to fake 13y/o teen girl accounts.
(12/2022)

“Facebook Knows Instagram Is Toxic for Teen Girls, Company Documents Show” – WSJ 9/14/21

1 in 5 teens feel worse

- But if 1 in 5 feel worse, do 4 in 5 felt neutral or better?
- How do we tweeze out who is having which experience?
- And who is at risk?



Body Image Conversation Starters

- What type of content do you receive in your feeds?
- How does the content that you receive in your feeds make you feel?
- Do you feel that your feed content is applicable to you?
- How do you feel about your body?
- Does social media affect how you feel about your body or your self-image?

Advice: Talk, Evaluate, Individualize

- Meet them where they are at – **Where are they starting from? How is it affecting them?**
- **Evaluate your feed** - Eliminate toxic content or content that makes you feel worse.
Turn off ads (monthly) on Instagram
- **Encourage taking breaks and reevaluating “your balance” use app limits to “pause”**
Social media is not evil, but **kids need time off social media to have balance.**
Setting a limit may help us to reflect.
When we ask for more time, we can pause to reflect on if our *other needs* are also being met.

In one study, limiting social media use to 30min/day showed a decrease in loneliness and depression, so if parents want a place to start 30min/day seems like a good place and adjust based on circumstances.

Robinson, A. et al. “Social comparisons, social media addiction, and social interaction: An examination of specific social media behaviors related to major depressive disorder in a millennial population.” *Journal of Applied Biobehavioural Research*.

Hunt, M. et al. “No More FOMO: Limiting Social Media Decreases Loneliness and Depression” *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*: Vol. 37, No. 10, pp. 751-768.

Q: Should I let my child have social media?

What Parents need to consider:

- Are children, tweens and teens developmentally capable of managing social media? If no, are they developmentally ready for group chats?
- No age restrictions for group chats – elementary kids are on them
 - Group Text Chats often function like platform-less social media
 - No ads/feeds
 - Often kids “post” on group chat - not for communication but to see the feedback
- Discuss how to handle situations that go astray
- Understand that -- almost, definitely -- they will make a mistake?

Group Chats can have real-world consequences: Harvard 2017 - Private online Facebook Group, 10 students' acceptances rescinded due to inappropriate group chats



Q: Is balance really important?

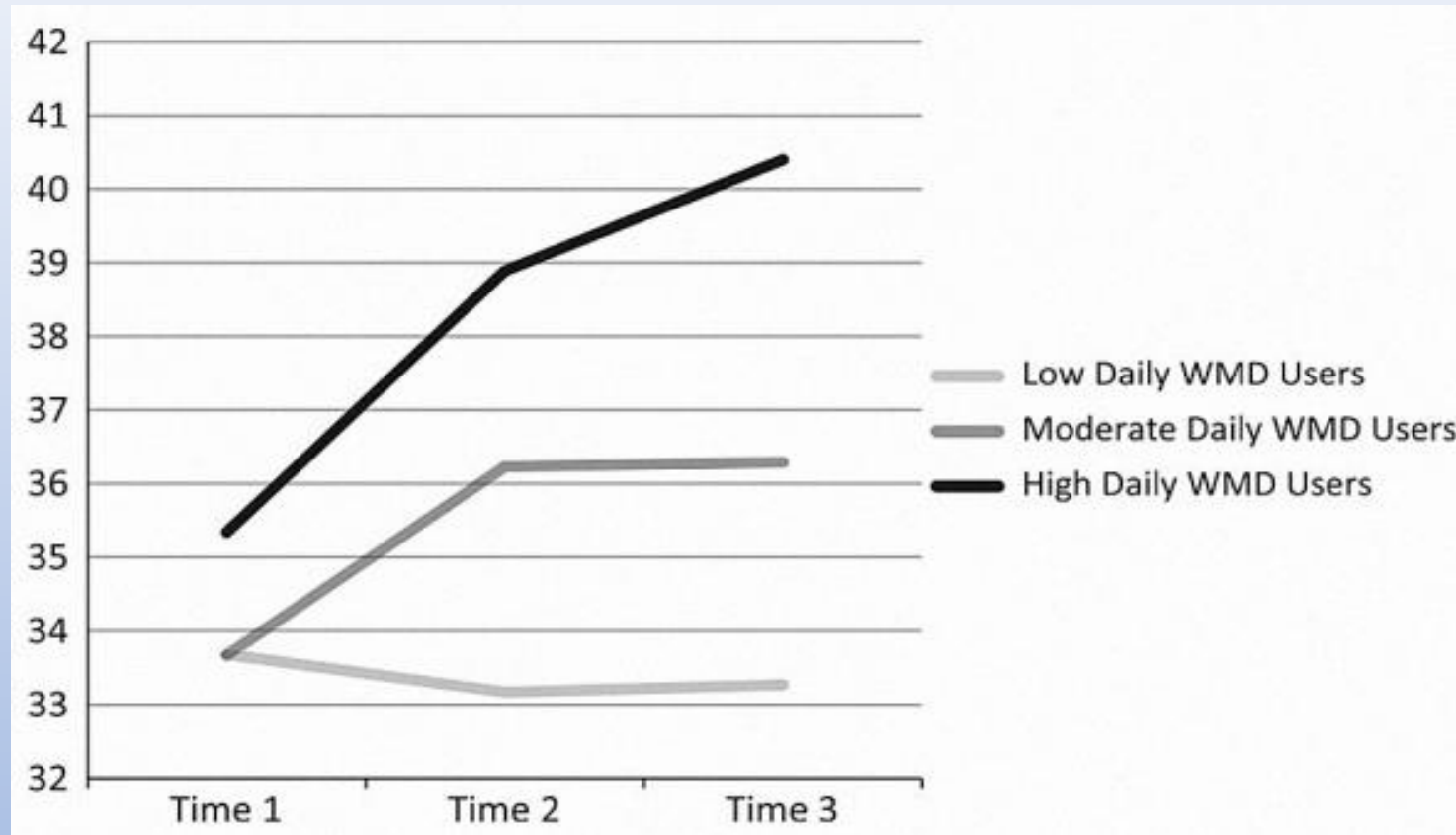
Q: Why is it so hard for my kid or for myself to step away from the device?

Q: Do I really need to set app limits or gaming limits?

iPhone Separation Anxiety:

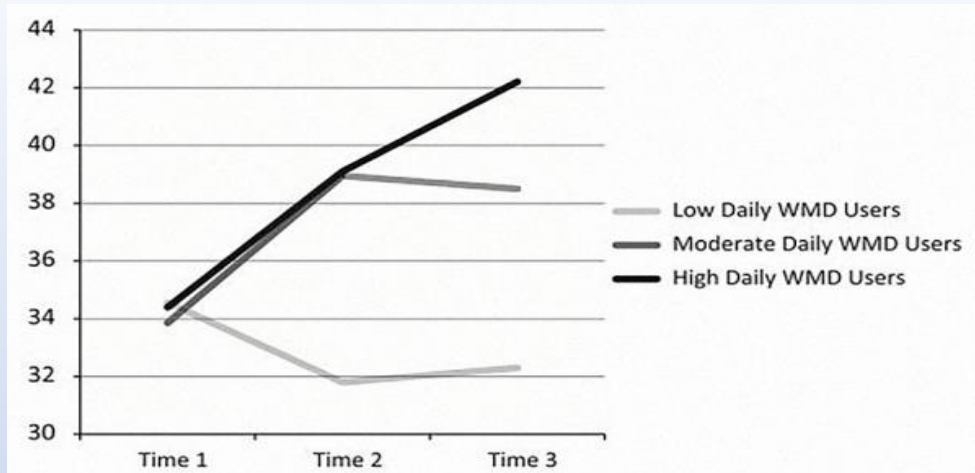
- Pew Research Center report:
- Roughly 4 out of 10 teenagers said they feel anxious when they leave home without their cell phone
- More than half (56%) associate the absence of their cell phone with at least one of these three emotions:
 - Loneliness
 - Being Upset
 - Feeling Anxious

State/Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) was administered three times, 20 min apart, beginning 10 min

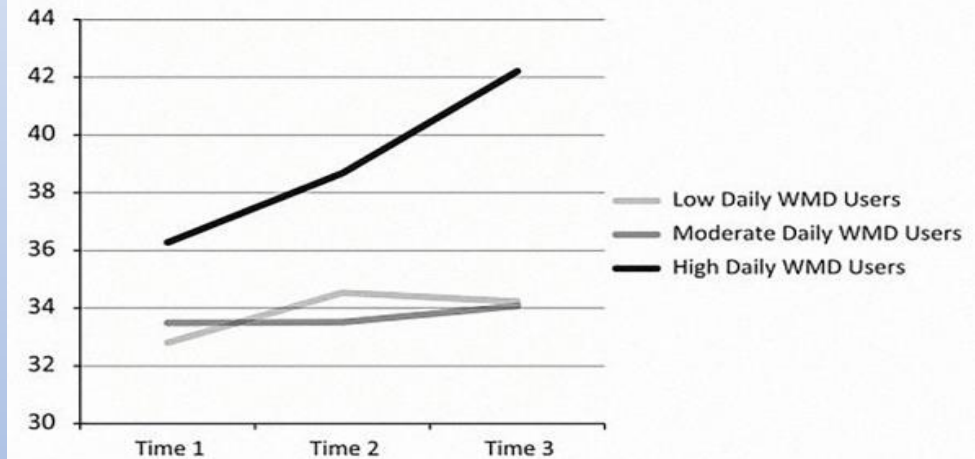


The interaction of testing time (bottom axis) and daily WMD use on anxiety (left axis). (WMD stands for wireless mobile device.)

Device Confiscated



Device Turned off
and Stored



WMD=wireless mobile device

The interaction between testing time (bottom axis) and daily WMD use on anxiety (left axis), separated into those whose device was confiscated (top graph) and those who shut it off (bottom).

Advice: Use App Limits &
Screen Time Monitoring
to Intentionally
Carve Out Balance

Online v. Offline Balance

Short Focus v. Long Focus

Discuss Gambling & In-App
Purchases

Have a Plan



Q: Why can't my child just ignore the notifications?

Word Search done while separated from ringing iPhone:

- Psychological Stressor: self-reported anxiety
- Physiological Stressor: HR, BP
- Cognition: Word Search

Advice: Use Do Not Disturb or Turn Off Notifications when doing homework

Q: The Fortnite Question - Will gaming turn my child into a school shooter?

Advice For Parents: Definitely not all bad, but we do need to have some discussions with kids

- Choose games that fit within your family's values
- Are you worried about violence, empathy, isolation with this child?
- How does the child act after gaming?
- Are they able to stop or take days off?
- Can you transition or add games that are sports oriented or more creative?
- Gambling & Lootboxes – have a plan for in-game purchases
- Gaming Disorder – set limits based on life balance, co-play, Use a Family Media Plan

Roblox

Minecraft

Fortnite

Among Us

What would you
choose? Rather

Gaming & Gambling



Loot boxes: common feature allows players to pay for items the reward (item) is randomized—linked to creating betting behavior

UK has seen a 4-fold increase in child gambling addiction since 2016 and has opened special clinics.


Ratings boards – informed consumption -- requiring more disclosure about In-Game Purchases and Odds of Loot boxes

Developers have a strategy to keep users playing

Parents need to have a strategy too

Media Use Plan

Take Home
Message: Limits
around device
use and
downtime are
important
because most of
us have trouble
self-regulating

- It's not just your kid. *EVERYONE* has a hard time putting a device down but *by instilling balance you will make that separation easier* and you will have *less of a fight on your hands*
 - The goal is not to be the gatekeeper forever
 - It is hard to unplug, but we need to teach children how to do it so that it becomes habit and they can have this skill when they are on their own
 - Parents may find this overwhelming – **That's because it is really hard BUT IT GETS EASIER**
- 



Developmentally – The teen is in flux

- Why do they lean towards high-risk behavior?
- Bucking Authority – telling them not to “because you said so” not effective
- Needing Autonomy – separating from adults in life
- Sense of invisibility
- Insecurity – puberty, friend groups change
- Lack of Attention/Self-esteem

What is the allure of engaging with strangers online?

- Trying out personalities – strangers feel safer
- Zero tolerance society – strangers have less consequences
- The new prank call
- Attention that they aren't getting elsewhere

Backpage, Omegle . . .

You can shut down the sites, but the perpetrators are still out there

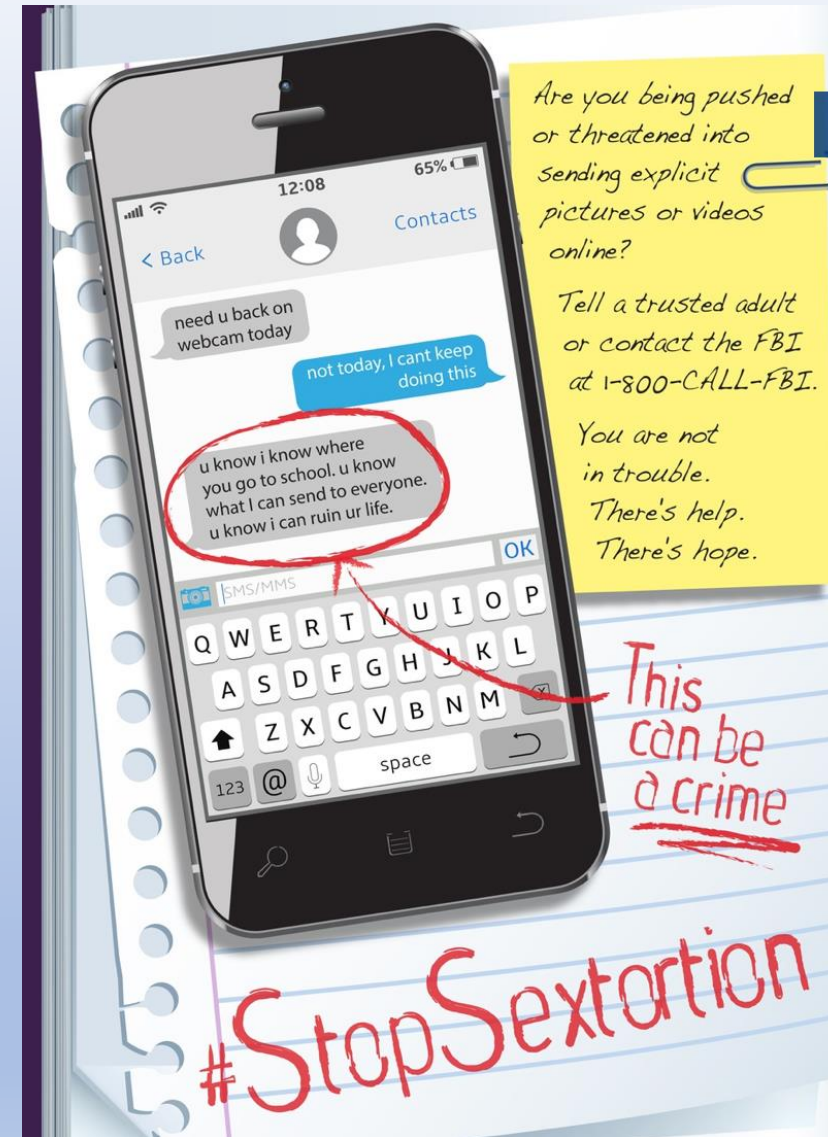
- We need to address the teen . . .
so that the teen is safe regardless of
what site they land on.

Teaching teens to recognize red-flags

- The way we talk about predators is not accurate and leaves kids vulnerable.
- It not about scaring them its about pulling the curtain back
- A savvy, educated, street-smart teen will be able to use social media in a way that meets his or her needs as opposed to being manipulated
- What does grooming look like?
- The big bad wolf analogy
- Teach them to see it for themselves and they will be more likely to make the right decision

Sextortion

“Sextortion begins when a predator reaches out to a young person over a game, app, or social media account. Through deception, manipulation, money and gifts, or threats, the predator convinces the young person to produce an explicit video or image. When the young person starts to resist requests to make more images, the criminal will use threats of harm or exposure of the early images to pressure the child to continue producing content.”



FBI Launches Stop Sextortion Campaign in Schools [FBI.gov](https://www.fbi.gov)

Sextortion and Exploitation

- Fear based narratives v Teaching kids to be savvy
- Being pre-emptive
- Addressing the whole child - Child centered approach:
 - Build self-esteem – a natural strength and deterrence
- Action Oriented v. Fear based hopelessness

The hidden dangers of video gaming:

It's not necessarily the games

- Know who your child games with
- Teach kids that people aren't always who they say they are
- Only game with people you know in real life
- Sextortion – Warn kids so they are less likely to be tricked and so they can come to you if there is ever an issue

Red Flag Phrases:

- I would never treat you like that.
- They don't see how special you are.
- If you were mine, I would make you feel how special you are.
- They don't appreciate you.
- You're so smart, you're so pretty. I'd love to have a photo of you.

When the conversation turns a little flirty – the teen often feels like this person sees you as older, mature, precocious –it feels like a compliment. The attention feels good.

The teen may have an inkling that something is a little off.
But, they think because they are online they are safe -- so they go with it.

They may continue to push the relationship online or they ask to meet.
They push for a meeting when teen is in a “crisis” feeling particularly low and alone.

Grooming process:

A prepped teen is more likely to recognize it. Less likely to be fooled

1. Initial contact : Usually, the predator sets up a fake account and poses as a child; then makes contact to assess if the target will accept them.

The predator may comment on a social media post saying something like, “You look nice. I’d like to talk to you.”

(PARENTS OCCASIONALLY GO THROUGH THEIR ONLINE FRIENDS AND MAKE SURE THEY KNOW THEM IN PERSON)

2. Gaining the Child’s Trust. Once the predator has an opening , they start chatting to gain trust by mirroring.

Usually open-ended questions: What are you into? Do you play sports? What grade are you in? What’s your worst subject? Do you have pets?

Looking to gain any information that will allow them to secure the child’s trust and align their responses with the child’s —“Oh I don’t like math either, it’s awful.”

3. Private message. After they chat for a while about general subjects, the predator will then move the conversation to to a private chat to find out about the family situation. Usually they ask things like:

- Are your parents married? Divorced? How many brothers and sisters do you have? Who do you live with?
- At this point, the predator is trying to gain information about the child’s personal life and how involved their caretakers are.

4. Sexual conversation. Once the predator has established a personal relationship,

They then move on to more suggestive and sexual questions:

Do you have a boyfriend or girlfriend?

Are you straight or gay? Have you ever had sex before?

5. Sexual pictures. How does a predator ask for a photo? Simple.

“I sure would like to see a picture of you!”

The child usually responds, with, “Like what?”

And that’s when the predator begins asking for anything they can get the child to send them.

6. Sexual videos. Once the predator gains the child’s trust,

They’ll have the child send a photo in a bathing suit, or something even more inappropriate; and then will use it against the child.

They’ll say something like, “If you don’t send me a video of you doing this, I’m going to send these photos to your parents, pastor, soccer coach.”

The child is “sexploited” into complying out of fear, and falls victim to sexual abuse.

Sextortion Conversation Starters and Guidance

- Do you ever game with other people? Do you know these people in real-life?
- Do you ever chat online with people you don't know in real-life
- Do you know all the people who follow you and who you're "friends" with on social media in real-life too?
- Have you ever had someone you met in a gaming community or app contact you outside of the game or app?
- Do you know that adults sometimes pose as youth in order to game with or talk to children and teens? Sometimes adults pose as youth to make friends with a young person so that they can take advantage of them or trick them into doing something later.
- There are instances of adults pressuring kids and teens to send explicit photos or videos and then threatening to publicize the photos or videos if the youth does not pay them or continue to provide content. Have you ever heard of this occurring? How would you handle a situation like this, who could you go to for help?

Q: Do I really need to talk about Sexting?

Q: What are the chances that this is an issue for my kid?

As early as 8 years old 10% of kids with smartphones will be exposed to sexting.

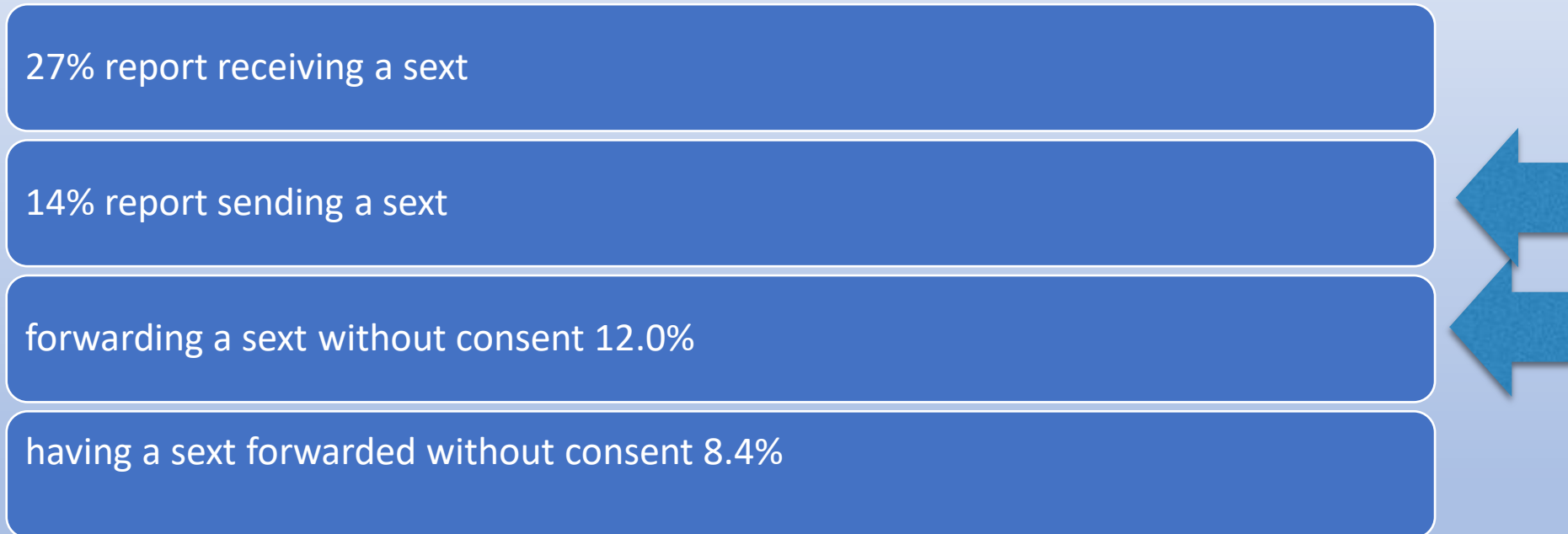
By 13y, more than 1/3 of kids with smartphones will be exposed to sexting.

By 13y, 24% of kids were asked to send nudes or requested them.

By 16y, 44% of girls and 37% boys are sexting.

SEXTING by the Numbers

Mean age of 15y (2018 Peds Jama Meta-analysis)



Madigan, Sheri et al. "Prevalence of Multiple forms of Sexting Behavior Among Youth: A Systemic Review and Meta-Analysis" JAMA Pediatrics. 2018; 172(4):327-335

"How Dangerous is Sexting for Kids?" Qustodio. May 17,2021

Advice: Talk about Sexting when you discuss other aspects of a respectful, consensual relationship

Is the issue the sex or the text?

Discuss what pressure looks like in a relationship.

Most tweens report being asked multiple times before sending
No means no, in both real and virtual worlds

Help kids have an out - Teach kids alternative responses BEFORE they need them – *they may not come to you at the time* 😊

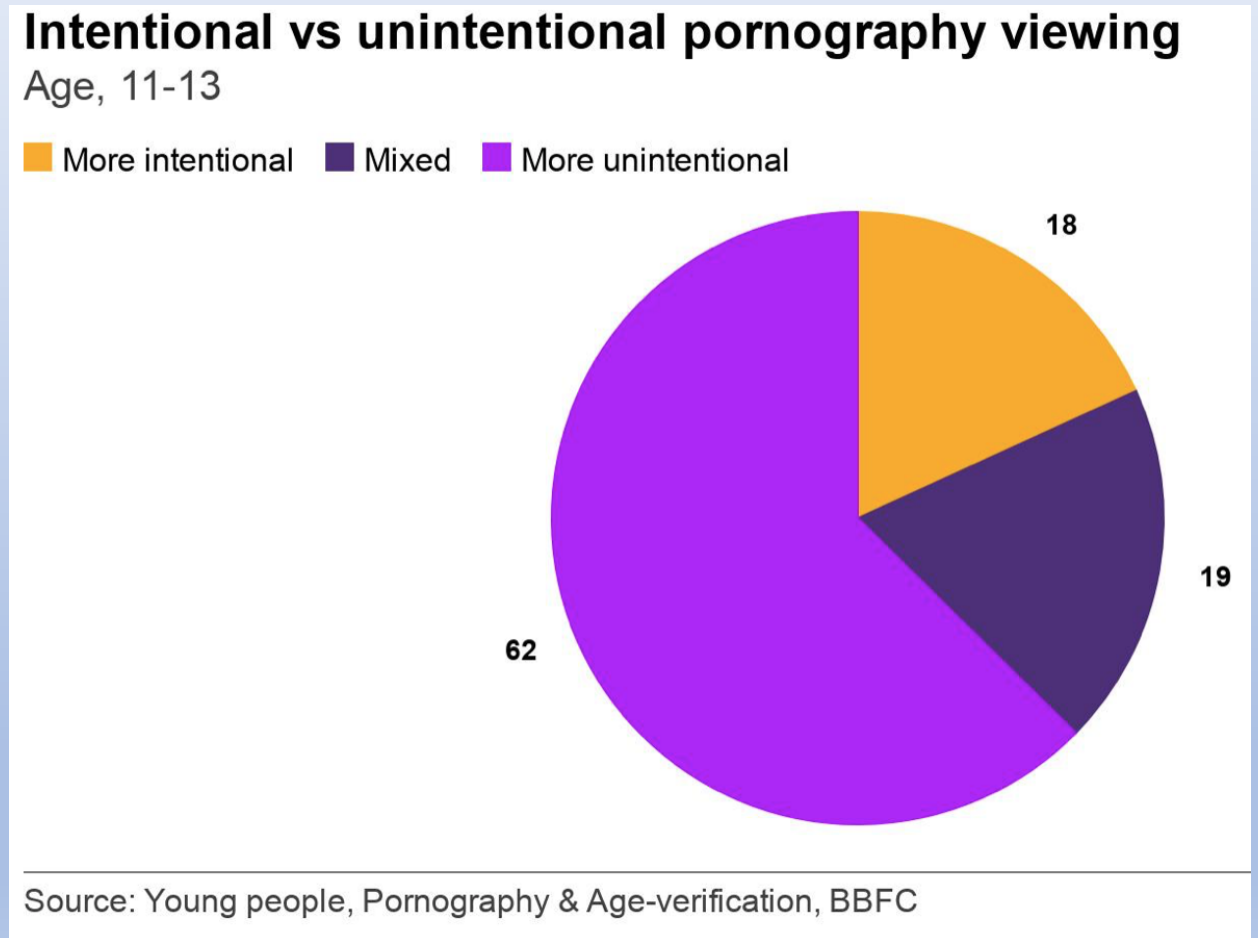
Respect Privacy - Teach kids that they cannot screenshot or forward without consent, distributing child pornography.

Sexting Conversation Starters and Guidance

- It is not uncommon for teens to be asked to send or receive a sext message, is this something you are familiar with?**
- Some teens say they don't know how to say "no" to sending a sext, especially if they like the person who is asking. What advice would you give someone in this situation?**
- Some teens report being asked multiple times and feeling pressured to send a sext, have you ever had this experience?**
- Sometimes teens report having images or messages that they created shared without their permission, has this ever happened to you?**
- In a respectful relationship, saying "no" should always be respected, this applies to saying "no" to sending a sext.**

Q: Do we really need to bother to set up devices to limit adult content?
Q: Can't I wait until high school to discuss porn?

- 10-13 y/o = Average age of child's 1st exposure to porn
- 1 out of 10 kids under 10 y/o has seen porn
- 10% of 7th graders felt they had a "porn issue"



Porn and Teens - In their own words

Shapes Sexual Scripts: 18% of sexually active teens said they'd been asked or coerced to do and try things seen in porn

30% said real sex hadn't lived up to their expectations from watching porn

29% of 11 to 17-year-olds felt badly about their bodies when they viewed porn

Linked with: Objectification, body shaming, aggressive sexism, high-risk sexual practices and promiscuity

“For many young people, pornography has become the default sex educator.”

Advice: Discussing porn can be weaved into a discussion about sex and healthy respectful relationships

Teen Teens often seek out porn to “learn”

- Teens believe what they see in porn is how sex should be. Many teens look at porn to “educate themselves.”
- The line of reality and fantasy is being blurred.
- Teens report feeling pressured to engage in aggressive and/or potentially demeaning sex acts

Adult Content Conversation Starters and Guidance

- **Have you ever viewed content that made you uncomfortable?**
- **Adult content is not uncommon online or on social media, have you encountered adult content or pornography while online?**
- **Sometimes kids use pornography to try to learn about sexual relationships but they may not realize that pornography is not depicting real-life and may not be modeling healthy, respectful, consensual relationships. If you wanted to learn more about sex, how would you get that information?**
- **When you do decide to have a sexual relationship, you should know that consenting to sex does not imply that you or your partner are consenting to all sexual acts. Have you ever been asked to do something that made you feel uncomfortable?**

Social Media & Drugs

- Dealers are on these platforms
- Dealers will deliver alcohol, drugs, vapes to your children
- If teen can't pay, they will "owe" the dealers
- Traffickers look to get teens hooked so that they can coerce them
- An addicted teen is more controllable

Fake Online Pharmacies & Teens:

- Teens may not realize that a fake online pharmacy, selling “prescription” drugs may not be selling legitimate prescription medication
- They believe they have found a loop-hole to get “real” prescription drugs without a prescription

- A fake pharmacy is not operating within the oversight of the FDA
- They sell unapproved prescription drugs
- The origin and safety of these prescriptions are unknown
- They sell prescription drugs without a prescription

1 Pill Can Kill

7 out of every 10 pills seized by the DEA contains a lethal dose of fentanyl

70% chance that a pill will contain a deadly dose of fentanyl

In 2024, the DEA has seized:

- More than 227 million deadly doses of fentanyl
- Over 33 million fentanyl laced pills

*source - dea.gov

Combatting Vulnerability

- Check-in with kids - This time should be screen free to facilitate open discussions
- Have routine times you talk: Car rides, bedtimes
- Screen free family dinners
- Be present and available
- You know your kid -- Ask when they seem off

- Reaffirm teens often – they have a lot of insecurity.
- Show them you love them: The 5 Love Languages
 - Quality time: spending one on one time (can even be a car ride)
 - Acts of Service: Show them they are your priority
 - Receiving Gifts: Might be as small as a little note
 - Physical Touch – Hugs and cuddles, sitting on the couch watching a sporting event or movie
 - Words of Affirmation: Reminding them that they mean everything to you even when they aren't perfect.

Promote Self-esteem

- Studies show that kids feel more successful when they are loved unconditionally (instead of being forced to 'win' approval).
- Praise them for their EFFORT, DEDICATION and PERSISTENCE... far more than just results. -- Growth Mindset v. Fixed Mindset. -- you don't have to be perfect to be loved
- Failure and mistakes are part of life, both in the virtual world and in the physical world. Expect children and teens to make mistakes.
- You are not defined by your mistakes. (Teens need to know they can come to you if things go awry online – or in person.)

Resilience

When confronted with the fallout of childhood trauma, why do some children adapt and overcome, while others bear lifelong scars that flatten their potential?

A growing body of evidence points to one common answer:

Every child who winds up doing well has had at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult.

Some kids are at higher risk – Identify them, try to connect

It's not about having "THE TALK". It's about talking, and talking , and talking

But more importantly it's about listening:

- When talking to teens about their platform use, focus on the teen rather than the technology. If you don't know the ins and outs of each particular platform – that's ok -- it's about teens experience.
- Make sure kids know they can come to you about their experiences online, even if they feel embarrassed or worried.
 - *What do you like about social media? How does that feel?*
 - *Have you seen anything creepy or concerning?*
- Caregivers can start by talking about their own media use and its relationship with their stress and mental health
- Start conversations early with younger children

Freedom with Boundaries

- Evaluate feeds. Eliminate toxic content or content that makes you feel worse. Turn off ads (monthly) on Instagram
- Are you the product – why are you getting the ads and feeds you’re getting?
- Talk about who they follow and why – Why do some people have so many followers? Does this make them cool?
- What bar do you have for following an influencer – Who do you want to influence you? Do you really trust their opinion, if so, why?
- Look over their “friends” – do they know them all in real life?
- REMEMBER: You can never be 100% sure that a stranger is who they say they are, pictures, videos can all be fake!

Be Actively Engaged in their online world

- Friend your teen online
- Setting limits and making media plans helps families reflect before jumping in.
- We allow children to do lots of risky things in life, but we teach and guide them first.

Robinson, A. et al. "Social comparisons, social media addiction, and social interaction: An examination of specific social media behaviors related to major depressive disorder in a millennial population." *Journal of Applied Biobehavioural Research*.

Hunt, M. et al. "No More FOMO: Limiting Social Media Decreases Loneliness and Depression" *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*: Vol. 37, No. 10, pp. 751-768.

Helping Teens Regain Control Over Social Media

- Evaluate your feed and eliminate toxic content or content that makes you feel worse.
- Unsubscribe from ads in your feeds and turn off autoplay when possible.
- Take breaks and use screen and app limits to maintain a healthy balance.
- Use “Do Not Disturb” functions and silence notifications to help maintain focus and protect screen-free time.
- Prioritize sleep by charging all devices outside the bedroom and having a 60-minute screen-free period prior to bed.

American
Academy of
Pediatrics
Family
Media Plan:

What is A Family Media Plan?

- A list of media priorities to choose from
- Adult age group included – parents need help balancing their devices too
- Practical tips to help make the plan work
- Educational component explaining to parents “Why its important”
- Print or share finished plan
- Option to save plan and return as often as you'd like to make changes
- Available in Spanish

AAP Resources for Families



Healthy digital habits
are just a click away!

Family Media Plan

The newly enhanced
Family Media Plan is here!
It's free & customizable
for the whole family.
Start your plan today!



 [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org)

PhoneReady Questionnaire



10 questions is all it takes. Take the
free quiz today to find out if your
child is ready for a cell phone.

**Stay one step ahead by being prepared for
what awaits your child in the digital world!**

American Academy
of Pediatrics 
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

 AT&T

HC318 09/22 Item #HC0589

Family Media Plan

Phone Readiness Quiz

Center of Excellence Q&A Portal

AAP Resources for Families

[Center of Excellence](#)

[Family Media Plan](#)

[Phone Readiness Quiz](#)

[Q&A Portal](#)

Quick Links:

[HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan](https://www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan)

[HealthyChildren.org/PhoneReadyQuiz](https://www.healthychildren.org/PhoneReadyQuiz)

[PhoneReadyQuiz.com](https://www.phone-ready-quiz.com)

[aap.org/socialmedia](https://www.aap.org/socialmedia)



Spanish Link & QR code

[HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan/ES](https://www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan/ES)

Spanish Link [HealthyChildren.org/PrimerTelefono](https://www.healthychildren.org/PrimerTelefono)



Prescriptions for Change – Concrete Changes

- 1. Set Boundaries & Encourage Balance – Review Screen and App Limits**
- 2. Choose Quality – Age Appropriateness, Ratings:**
 - Advise Parents to use site like Common Sense Media.
 - Co-view.
- 3. Curate your feed monthly and unsubscribe to ads in your feed**
- 4. Protect sleep – 8-10 hours of sleep a night**
 - Device curfew 1h before bed
 - Charge outside the room
- 5. Decrease Pick-ups - Turn off what you can Notifications, AutoPlay**
 - Reduce Recommendations, Retargeting
- 6. Decrease Anxiety**
 - Silence Notifications.
 - Use Do Not Disturb or Work Mode during family time and homework
- 7. Protect Family Time**
 - Don't bring devices to the table.
 - Turn TV off when not viewing
- 8. Protect Privacy - Turn off location tracking. Review privacy settings. Only interact with people you know**