



Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in Online Spaces

César Escobar-Viera, MD, PhD
Candice Biernesser, PhD, LCSW

STAR Conference
May 10th, 2024

1

AGENDA

- 1**
Overview of risk and protective factors for mental health among LGBTQ+ youth on social media
- 2**
Survey research examining LGBTQ+ youth's social media use and experiences
- 3**
Strategies and resources for fostering safe & healthy online spaces for LGBTQ+ youth

2

OVERVIEW OF RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

LGBTQ+ YOUTH, MENTAL HEALTH, AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE & EXPERIENCES

3

OVERVIEW

Social media's influence on adolescents' mental health has raised attention from families to national leaders in health and education, *particularly among youth who are most vulnerable.*



The slide features several logos of national organizations: The American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, American Psychological Association, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, U.S. Public Health Service, National Education Association, and National PTA. The text is positioned on the left side of the slide, and the logos are arranged in a grid-like pattern on the right.

4

MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS & SUICIDE RISK AMONG LGBTQ+ YOUTH

	Symptoms of Anxiety	Symptoms of Depression	Seriously Considered Suicide	Attempted Suicide
All youth 2022 Teen National Health Survey & Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2011	21% in past 2 weeks	17% in past 2 weeks	22% in past year	10% in past year
LGBTQ+ youth Trevor Project Survey 2023	67% in past year	54% in past year	41% in past year	14% in past year

LGBTQ+ youth experience higher rates of mental health concerns and suicidal thoughts and behaviors, as well as violence, discrimination, and adversity – experiences that occur *both in-person and online*.

5

LGBTQ+ YOUTH & SOCIAL MEDIA

- LGBTQ+ youth are frequent consumers of social media
 - 5 hours per day online on average (45 min than non-LGBTQ+ youth).
 - While this use might increase exposure to negative experiences, it also offers an affirming space for LGBTQ+ youth.

Affirming spaces among LGBTQ young people:

Home	38%
School	54%
Community Events	16%
Online	68%

6

CONSIDERING SOCIAL MEDIA WITH BALANCE

Despite the widespread attention to negative consequences of social media, research suggests we consider this topic with balance, *equally recognizing risk and protective factors.*

Hamilton et al, 2023

7

RISK FACTORS FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH

Social media can extend **minority stress** experiences into online lives.

- Distal minority stress processes: exposure to discriminatory or prejudicial events
- Proximal minority stress processes: rejection, concealment, internalized stigma

Online victimization:

- Hurtful comments, images, behaviors inflicted through online spaces (Tynes et al, 2010)
- Higher rates of social media use are thought to contribute to added exposure to rejection, bullying, harassment, & discrimination (Fisher et al, 2024)
- LGBTQ+ youth experience 3x the rates of online victimization compared to non-LGBTQ+ youth

8

Direct verbal harassment
[He] called me the F slur a million times.

Indirect verbal harassment
[They were] kind of vague posting, so like when I came out as non-binary, there was only one person who really came up to me and was talking to me about stuff in a hateful way.

Physical threats
There have been threats to my dad's temple and to my school that are related to the comment like, 'You're not a true Jewish space if you allow queer people.' And I think that one's really difficult for me.

Sexual harassment
There's a whole channel in the server for kind of sharing the DMs that we get... There's a lot in there and it's sad. Then sometimes some of the dudes will message us, message me, and they'll be like 19. Even after that, I say I'm 16, they will still continue to ask for inappropriate sexual favors.

BIERNESSER ET AL, UNDER REVIEW

9

HOW AND WHY THIS MATTERS

- Experiences of minority stress are chronic & unique in their contribution to mental health & have been directly linked with suicidal behavior among LGBTQ+ youth (Kelleher, 2009).
- Online victimization stands out, even among other social media-related risk factors, in contributing to a range of outcomes related to self-injurious thoughts and behaviors: non-suicidal self-injury, suicidal thoughts, suicidal plans, and suicide attempts (Nesi et al, 2021).

10

PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH

Social connection:

- An avenue to anonymously connect with peers and reduce feelings of isolation, particularly when there are few offline opportunities for connection

Identity development:

- Considered a safe environment to foster identity development, reducing fear and stigma in identity expression with options to manage disclosures

Social support:

- A way to extend support offered in-person through giving and receiving information & discussing experiences among like-minded peers

11

The infographic features a dark blue background with white circuit-like lines. It is divided into three sections, each with a colored box containing a quote:

- Connection with like-minded others** (blue box): "It is sort of a little hub where you can go to get away from people who are intolerant. (Michael, 16-years-old, trans man)"
- Safe space for information** (green box): "I come from a pretty conservative family, and I would not feel comfortable asking questions about certain things. (Tania, 17-year-old female)"
- Opportunity for identity exploration** (teal box): "Without social media, I probably would not be so open. Social media means that you're open to a whole lot of conversations that you weren't going to have face-to-face. (Dakota, 16-year-old female)"

At the bottom right, there is a citation: BERGER MN ET AL (2021) [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1071/SH21110](https://doi.org/10.1071/SH21110)

12

HOW AND WHY THIS MATTERS

Social support, connectedness, and positive identity formation are known to be protective to adolescents' mental health and suicide risk.

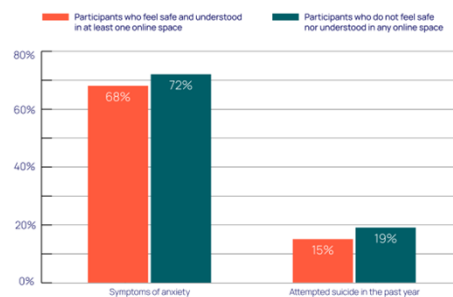
- Online social support attenuates the relationship between victimization and suicidal ideation (Massing-Shaffer et al, 2020)
- Acceptance and support online is associated with reduced depression and loneliness among LGBTQ+ youth (Ceglarek & Ward and Pellicane, 2020)
- LGBTQ+ Affirming spaces that promote inclusivity and expression have been associated with lower rates of suicidal ideation and behavior (Gorse, 2020)

13

INTERSECTING MARGINALIZED IDENTITIES

LGBTQ+ youth with multiple marginalized identities may experience both greater exposure to risks and opportunities for benefit from social media.

Rates of Mental Health Indicators among LGBTQ+ Young People of Color Who Feel Safe and Understood in At Least One Online Space



14

RESEARCH UPDATE

SURVEY RESEARCH EXAMINING LGBTQ+ YOUTH'S SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND EXPERIENCES

15

LGBTQ+ YOUTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

Emotional	Informational	Appraisal
Sense of belonging to a community	LGBTQ issues, news, representation	Feelings of validation
Anonymity helps in sharing experiences	Learning about LGBTQ and intersecting identities	Affirming support of “likes” and positive comments
Helpful with offline concerns and it reduces feelings of isolation	Learning about relationships, sex, sexual health, gender affirming care	Compliments on appearance and ‘passing’ (gender diverse youth)

Selkie et al, DOI: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2019.08.011

16

WHAT FEELS SUPPORTIVE FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

CONNECTING WITH LGBTQ GROUPS

- “There’s a lot of good support groups on [Reddit], specific to certain people. Many kids there. . . you can post, people will give you advice, or support. I go to a couple subreddits that are for [bisexual] teens who are looking for support”

(Emily, 19, bisexual, cis female)

POSITIVE REPRESENTATION

- “LGBTQ accounts with funny content make me smile, lift me up and I know that there are people out there rooting for me who wouldn’t want me to give up”

(Adora, 17, lesbian, cis female)

Escobar-Viera et al, DOI: 10.3389/fdgth.2022.900695

17

WHAT FEELS SUPPORTIVE FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

CONTENT FROM PEOPLE WITH SHARED EXPERIENCE

- “I relate more to suggestions from people that are in a rural community or have been in one. Whereas if they’re from a more accepting area, it’s harder to use their advice”

(Jackson, 19, bisexual, trans male)

JOINING GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES

- “Snapchat groups. Those people I know and I’m friends with. Even though we’re spread out, we’ll go to the group and we’ll message, ask how their day’s been.”

(Grant, 16, gay, cis male)

Escobar-Viera et al, DOI: 10.3389/fdgth.2022.900695

18

BLACK, HISPANIC, AND WHITE LGBTQ+ PEOPLE SEEK SUPPORT FROM SOCIAL MEDIA IN DIFFERENT WAYS

Sources of support with similar identities	Use of mutually anonymous support from strangers	Strategies to restrict family presence on social media
Safe environment (Black and Hispanic)	Psychological safety (Hispanic)	Avoiding conflict (Black, Hispanic, and White)
Tailored advice (Black and Hispanic)	Passive support (Hispanic)	Finding context-specific advice (Black, Hispanic, and White)
Non-prioritization of shared identities (White)		

Gordon et al, DOI: 10.2196/51702

19

POSITIVE SOCIAL MEDIA INTERACTIONS MIGHT BE PROTECTIVE FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN LGBTQ+ YOUTH

- Online friends can be an important source of social support for LGBTQ+ youth (Ybarra et al, 2015)
- Increased social media use increased perceptions of social support among LGBTQ+ people (Gerke et al, 2020)
- Among early teens, LGBTQ youth were significantly more likely to join online support groups to reduce feelings of isolation (Charmaraman et al, 2024)
- Social media experiences of acceptance predict lower depression symptoms over time among LGBTQ+ emerging and young adults, but NOT heterosexual peers (Pellicane et al, 2021).

20

PRIDE IM PROJECT: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY IN A NATIONAL SAMPLE OF LGBTQ+ EMERGING AND YOUNG ADULTS

- February to November 2022
- Social media recruitment, 18-30 years of age
- 4 web-based surveys, 1 every 2.5 months
- Social media experiences, interactions (e.g., support, connectedness)
- Depressive symptoms (PHQ-9)
- Well-known protective and risk factors (e.g., support, connectedness, ACE)
- Demographic characteristics
- Time spent on social media

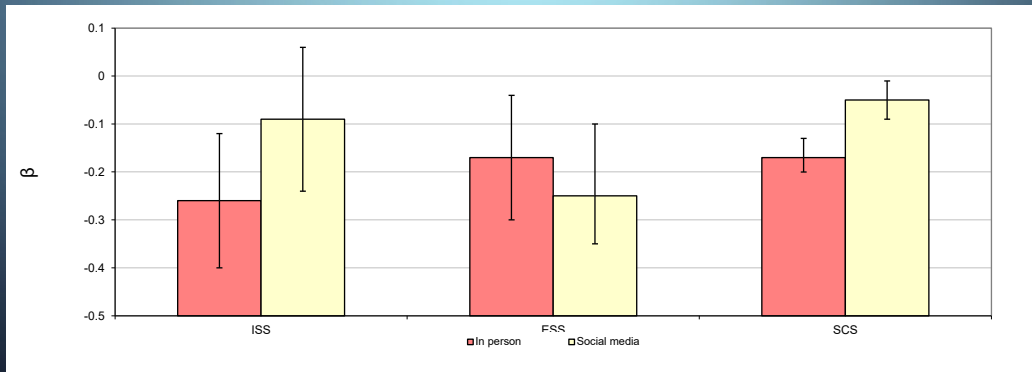
21

QUESTION 1A AND 1B

- Are SM-based social connectedness, emotional, and informational support different from in-person social connectedness, emotional, and informational support ?
- If so, are SM-based and in-person social connectedness, emotional, and informational support independently associated with depressive symptoms?

22

EFFECT OF IN-PERSON AND SOCIAL MEDIA PROTECTIVE INTERACTIONS ON DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS CONTROLLING FOR COVARIATES (N = 585)



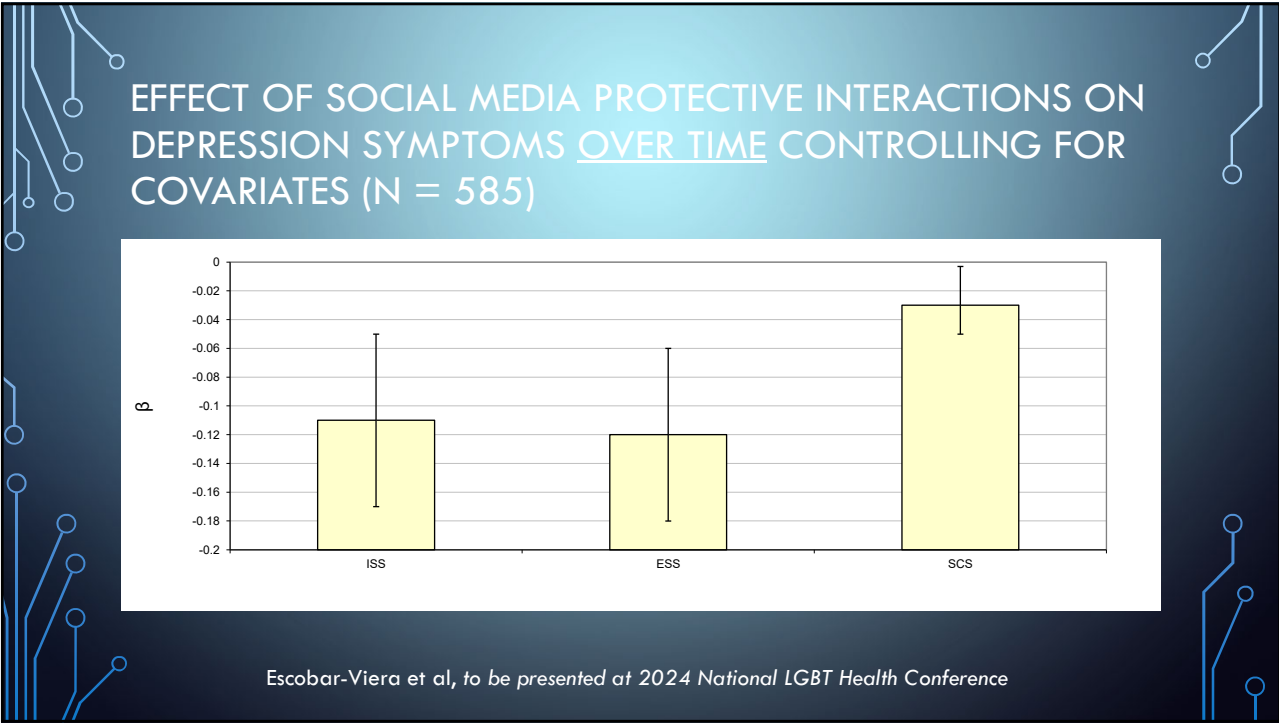
Escobar-Viera et al, *under review*

23

QUESTION 2

- Are changes in SM-based social connectedness, emotional, and informational support over time associated with changes in depressive symptoms?

24



25

STRATEGIES & RESOURCES

FOR FOSTERING SAFE & HEALTHY ONLINE SPACES FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH (PREVENTION AND TREATMENT)

26

SOCIAL MEDIA LITERACY TO IMPROVE LGBTQ+ YOUTH'S MENTAL WELL-BEING

Social media self-efficacy refers to a person's perceived ability to reach desired outcomes in their social media interactions (i.e., skills in curating a positive and supportive online environment).

- Focus on building strength and skills, not just on reduce deficits

Education to promote social media self-efficacy may improve social media interactions and enhance youth mental well-being.

- Build with and for LGBTQ+ youth
- Think with an intersectionality framework (race, ethnicity, rurality)

27

REJECTING NEGATIVITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

NEGATIVITY BIAS

Negativity bias causes us to be more affected by negative events more than positive ones. Our minds expect "normal" and good things to happen all the time, so when bad things occur, they affect us more strongly, no matter how minor it is.

Seeing a homophobic Facebook post that your family and friends are laughing at can affect you more than hitting your 100 Day Snap streak with your partner that same day.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Allow yourself to be excited about positive social media experiences, no matter how small. Our brains may emphasize the small, negative things, but you have every right to appreciate the small, positive things like:

- Adding a new friend on a platform
- A crush liking one of your posts
- Getting a good reaction to a funny GIF you sent or joke you told
- Finding a vlogger that you enjoy or relate to a lot

I filter who I see and follow and if they fit the people I want to see around me, whether they're part of the LGBTQ+ community or I'm friends with them. If I see something that they support that I'm not a fan of, I just remove them then.

PAVTON, 19, LESBIAN

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Take control of your feed! Don't be afraid to:

- Mute
- Block
- Unfriend/unfollow
- Create filtered lists

If you feel like an account you encounter is upsetting you, you have every right to remove them as necessary. It can be short-term, like muting them for a few days, or permanent, like unfollowing.

I remember I was in an AP class and we had this big group chat for homework help. But then students started being really competitive with each other and sometimes would cheat there. I felt very uncomfortable. I left the group chat and it was kind of indicative to me in general how I should treat social media.

ALYXIA, 18, LESBIAN

28

ENGAGING WITH BALANCE

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

- Creating content
- Writing and uploading posts
- DM's, texts, and leaving comments

I sh@post on Facebook. Just allow my friends to get some comedy.

HANNAH, 18, BISEXUAL

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Determine what kind of user you prefer to be on which platform.
- You may also prefer some platforms more than others depending on the people you interact with on there and how comfortable you are being yourself

tip #1

Discord is a chat app, so I have to be active there. I role play a lot. It talks to my friends on Tumblr. I tend to reblog things and sometimes I lurk, but my favorite thing to do is posting my art, and then people reblog it and I'll get likes and comments on it, which is fantastic.

THEO, 17, TRANSGENDER LESBIAN

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

tip #2

- Engage in things that you enjoy and that you relate to.
- Both active and passive engagement can negatively influence you, so it's important to seek out the content you engage with that makes you happy.
- Would you rather argue with a troll or DM friends?
- Would you rather doomscroll or watch a LGBTQ+ vlogger you relate to?

PASSIVE ENGAGEMENT

- Lurking and refreshing apps
- Watching and reading content
- Liking, favoriting, and reacting to posts

For YouTube, I watch a lot of satisfying videos and gaming and such. I listen to music on there sometimes.

ALLIE, 15, BISEXUAL

POSITIVE VS NEGATIVE ENGAGEMENT

active

The Positive:

- Developing and maintaining relationships
- Creating and posting things that make you happy and keep you busy

The Negative:

- Getting into arguments and fighting
- Developing "addictive" patterns through prioritizing interactions online more than off social media

passive

The Positive:

- Watching and following accounts that you can privately and safely relate to
- Low-effort communication with others through liking and sharing

The Negative:

- Doomscrolling
- Feeling self-conscious about interacting with others

29

CONNECTING WITH ACTUAL ALLIES

FRIENDSHIPS ONLINE

We typically communicate with others via:

- Social media (online)
- In person (offline)

Social media can help you stay connected and strengthen relationships with those you're closest with in your day-to-day life.

Social media also provides an outlet to meet others like you that you otherwise don't have access to because of where you live and what the population is like there.

In an urban area, you could actually reach people in their life more because there's more of a community. In a rural area, you just have to... you might have to branch out on places like social media to find your people.

DUSTIN, 18, GAY

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Without social media, I wouldn't have gotten out of my bad home situation. I wouldn't have moved in with my foster mom. She's more of a mom to me than my ever mom was, and we met online, and now I live with her.

THEO, 17, TRANSGENDER LESBIAN

- Aim to have a mix of both friends that you know in real life and friends you only talk to online. Both can benefit you in different ways.
- Ideally, the interactions you have online can also exist offline. It can be difficult to find ways to meet online friends, but if it's something you can set a goal to do, then it's a relationship worth keeping close to you.

WHO DO YOU TALK TO ONLINE?

The strongest friendships you have on social media are ideally those that you also have offline.

This isn't always possible if you can't feel fully like yourself around those you know or feel unsafe around in your everyday life.

Strong friendships online are those that you maintain offline or can see yourself working towards having offline in the future.

I think social media is the fastest way to get support. Let's say you post something on Facebook. Like, "My parents kicked me out of the house because I'm gay." People can comment that or privately message you about it, and you can talk about it. My friends are just there at the click of a button.

ALLIE, 15, BISEXUAL

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Have consistent interactions with those who make you happy, feel safe, and feel like yourself on social media
- Following, interacting, and talking to people who you know will reciprocate can improve both your social media experience and your overall wellbeing.

Keeping in contact with my school friends is our most convenient form of communication. We have group chats on Snapchat and it's easy to send photos and video chat with each other and keep in contact.

ALEXI, 16, LESBIAN

30

LIMITING PLATFORMS

YOU VS SCREENTIME

Is your screentime higher than you want it to be? Experts suggest spending less than two hours a day across your devices.

What you do (or don't do) on social media can add up. This includes:

- Talking to others in comments or DMs
- Constantly refreshing and cycling through apps
- Watching videos
- Posting content like Facebook posts or tweets
- Reading threads

The negative part of [social media] I think would just be spending so much time on the Internet with your friends that you isolate yourself in a real life or you kind of base all of your self-worth off of how your stuff do on social media.

EMILY, 19, BISEXUAL

WHICH APPS DO YOU ENJOY?

Social media platforms don't all serve the same purpose. While you feel like you have to have accounts on some platforms because they're popular and you know people on them, others ones might be really helpful to you because of the support system you have on there.

I would say my favorite platform for finding support is definitely, Discord. I'm out in parts of it. It's a lot easier to find people who have either been through the same things or similar things as me and who have sympathy towards my situation.

LILY, 19, TRANSGENDER BISEXUAL

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Try aiming for two hours a day on platforms that benefit you the most.
- Use your screentime on platforms that you enjoy watching content on, or ones that you use to talk to close friends on, especially when you need support.

It depends on what platform I choose to use depending on what I need support on. My friends, they do reach out and whether they're friends in real life or online friends or if I post something public, a lot of strangers will support me also.

ALLIE, 15, BISEXUAL

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

I find it to be a toxic space, and that's one of the reasons I won't get TikTok, because I find those to be much more toxic. You see everything everyone's doing so you could say something mean about them.

ALLIE, 15, BISEXUAL

Are you sure you want to permanently delete?

- Delete, deactivate, or remove the accounts that you don't find yourself either using and/or enjoying. If you still use it from time to time, you can set time limits on these apps.
- For example, if you only use Facebook because you have family on there, but don't really put anything up on there, you can keep your account, but delete the app off your phone.

31

ASSESSING LGBTQ+ YOUTH'S ONLINE EXPERIENCES

Recognize, with balance, both risks and benefits of social media for LGBTQ+ youth.

- Frame questions that inspire openness and recognize the teen as the expert in their own experience.

Ask directly about teen's social media experiences including experiences of anti-LGBTQ+ bullying and discrimination and impacts on mental health & suicide risk.

- Only 38% of teens tell trusted adults in their life about these experiences, fewer yet (18%) among LGBTQ+ youth
- Teens express they're unlikely to bring mental health consequences of social media up unless they're asked. "I wouldn't just talk about it out of the blue."

32

TREATMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Work collaboratively with youth to:

- Understand how social media influences them, their mood, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors
- Dial into relationships that help them in positively identity development and seek support and connection
- Reduce access to people and online spaces where bullying and discrimination are likely to occur

Potential clinical strategies:

- **Bolster motivation for help-seeking:** address barriers & facilitate connections to others (ideally trusted adults) to talk about online experiences
- **Distress tolerance & emotion regulation techniques:** support coping with immediate impacts of negative social media experiences
- **Social problem-solving skills:** aid youth in responding to social media experiences and making decisions to support a safe and happy social media environment

33

Skill of the day: Social Media & Mood

Today's skill of the day focuses on bringing awareness to your mood and social media use. An activity you could try today is checking in with your mood before you use social media and choosing mindfully what you'll do online based on how you're feeling.

Often when our mood isn't the greatest before going on social media, we can be more impacted by negative content. In those moments either taking a break from social media or being purposeful in dialing into positive content can help.

A pro tip for dialing into positive content is thinking of things online that are genuinely entertaining, that spark a creative interest, or that help us to learn something new and interesting.

If you're not sure where to find positive content on social media, our SPARC Life research team has your back. Check out our Instagram account: @sparc_life_pat. We post uplifting and mental health positive content daily, written with care for teens.

Skill of the day: DIALING INTO POSITIVITY

Today's skill of the day focuses on being mindful of positive aspects of your online environment. An activity you can do today is reflecting on ways you've used social media or texting in the past couple of weeks that have made you feel good (for example: friends complimenting you, being there for you, or making you laugh). Think about how you can dial into that positivity and how you can be a support in return to others in your life.

Pro tip: When you figure out who those positive people are in your life, try out talking with them in a way that is real and honest. Being our true selves with close and trusted friends both online and in-person can improve self-esteem and wellbeing.

Skill of the Day: Filtering Out Negativity

Today's skill of the day focuses on filtering out negativity online. An activity you could try today is thinking about taking steps to create the online environment you want, that feels safe and secure for you. Some other teens have found useful are making your accounts private, creating filters so that only certain people see certain posts, and blocking/muting people who have said or done negative things online to you or others in the past. Here are some tips about how to decide to block someone.

You do not owe anyone a presence on your social media. Blocking someone is an action within your power, a statement that you can make, or a choice you can make in favor of your mental health and wellbeing.

- Put a Stop to Abuse:** If someone is using hateful or abusive language, or harassing you, you should block them. You don't owe them views or responses — give your time and attention to someone who deserves it instead.
- Create Boundaries:** You are entitled to choose who you want to view your profile. Set boundaries that make you feel best about yourself.
- Give Yourself Space:** You have a right to take space—whether it's a former romantic partner or friend, someone who impacts you negatively, etc. Blocking can give you space to heal without being faced with that person's life online.
- Remove Yourself from Deepening Insecurities:** Social media only shows the best parts of others' lives, and comparison can make you feel bad about yourself. Don't feel guilty about blocking someone for your own mental health.
- Avoid Reminders of a Difficult Time:** Certain content can be triggering if it reminds you of a past struggle. Blocking or unfollowing content creators that trigger you can help you gain peace of mind and heal.

Skill of the day: TAKING A SOCIAL MEDIA BREAK

- 1 Today's skill of the day focuses on taking a break from social media. Social media has lots of positives like connection to close friends and just offering endless hours of entertainment.
- 2 At the same time, if others are being hateful online or social media is negatively impacting our mood, it can be a good time to take a break.
- 3 Today you could try purposefully taking a break from social media, even if for a short time. Put your phone in a different room or out of earshot, so you're not bothered by notifications.
- 4 Instead do something positive offline. You could talk to a friend, listen to music, take a walk, do something creative, or whatever works for you. You can read more about how to take a break from social media on Flourish's website.
- 5 Pro tip: Taking a break from social media can have a big impact in the hour before sleep. When we unplug before bed, it can improve sleep quality and mood throughout the next day.

34

UNDERSTANDING NEGATIVE ONLINE INTERACTIONS

Why might someone be mean to you online? Often, it has more to do with them than it does with you.

- There might be something stressful going on in their lives or at home with their family.
- They might be feeling pressure from others to be negative.
- They may be insecure within themselves, so they project that negativity onto others.
- They may have taken on the views of others who have hateful thoughts toward LGBTQ+ people.

WHEN SOMEONE IS BEING HURTFUL, IT'S OFTEN BECAUSE OF OTHER THINGS HAPPENING IN THEIR LIVES OR PRESSURES THAT THEY'RE EXPERIENCING. IT'S NOT BECAUSE THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOU.

THIS ISN'T YOUR FAULT!

REFLECTING ON NEGATIVE INTERACTIONS

When we have negative experiences, it can help to express what happened and how we're feeling.

- Talk to someone**
Consider talking to someone. You can let them know what happened and get support, or you can think together about what to do next.
- Write about it**
If you're not ready to talk it out, you can try writing about it to get your thoughts and feelings down on paper.
- Find meaning**
Try writing out your story but ending with something that lifts you up or finds meaning from your situation.
- Journaling tips**
If you're having trouble finding something meaningful or uplifting, you can also try the GLAD journaling technique.

GLAD = Gratitude, Learning, Accomplishments, and Delight
Think of something you're grateful for today.
Think of one thing you learned today.
Think of one thing you accomplished today.
Think of one thing that delighted you today.

How to Talk to a Trusted Adult about Negative Online Interactions

- Choose a good time**
Plan to talk to a trusted adult when you have their full attention.
- Be clear**
Be clear about what is going on. If you are too vague, it might be harder for a trusted adult to understand what happened and support you appropriately.
- Discuss feelings**
Talk about how the negative interaction made you feel. Are you hurt, afraid, disappointed, confused, frustrated?
- Look for answers together**
Negative online interactions can be difficult to deal with. Your trusted adult might not know how to handle it either. You could suggest searching for online resources together to develop the best course of action.
- Use your knowledge**
Some adults might not know much about social media and internet harassment. Do what you can to share your knowledge to give them necessary context.
- Conversation starter**
If you need help starting the conversation, try this: "I got this message the other day that kinda freaked me out, and I just want you to listen..." or "I need help figuring out how to deal with something that happened the other day..."
- Start small**
It might be easier to start the conversation with a text. You could send a text to a trusted adult ahead of time to make sure they have time to speak with you, too.

Info from Cyberbullying411.com

35

RESOURCES FOR PROTECTING LGBTQ+ TEENS' WELLBEING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- Trevor Project's [Guide for Protecting Your Space and Wellbeing on Instagram](#)
- [GLAAD's Social Media Safety Index](#): provides reviews of safety across the major social media safety platforms
- Consumer Report's practical step-by-step [guidance for filtering out hate speech on social media](#)
- [Social Media Test Drive](#): simulated learning to promote digital literacy

36

FINDING LGBTQ+ SAFE ONLINE SPACES

Trevor Project's [Trevor Space](#): affirming online community for LGBTQ+ youth ages 13-24

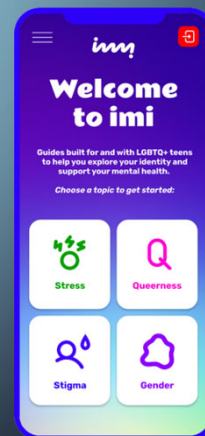
[LGBT National Help Center Youth Chat Rooms](#): moderated chat rooms for youth <19

[Q Chat](#): moderated online community chat space for LGBTQ+ teens to connect with like-minded peers

37

RESOURCES FOR LGBTQ+ MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDE PREVENTION

- [imi](#) is a free, digital, evidence-based mental health tool for LGBTQ+ teens (coping skills, queer identity affirmation, mental health resources).
- [CenterLink](#): network of LGBTQ centers that provide essential services promoting growth, wellness, and community connection
- Crisis Hotlines:
 - [Trevor Project](#): text START to 678-678 or call 1-866-488-7386
 - [Trans Lifeline](#): call 877-565-8860
 - [Call Blackline](#): call 1-800-604-5841



38

RESPONDING TO ONLINE VICTIMIZATION

Right to Be's guides:

- [understanding online harassment](#)
- [responding to online harassment](#)
- [self-care following online harassment](#)
- [bystander guide](#)

Reporting Online Victimization:

- [Safe2Say](#) (1-844-SAF2SAY)
- [PA Bullying Prevention Consultation Line](#) (1-877-716-0424)

39

RESOURCES FOR SUPPORTING POSITIVE IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Trevor Project's Guides (trevorproject.org): The [Coming Out Handbook](#) and [Black and LGBTQ+ Approaching Intersectional Conversations](#)

WeRNative (wernative.org): Has a free weekly [caring messages program](#) for indigenous LGBTQ+ youth

Asian Pride Project (asianprideproject.org): Stories of LGBTQ+ youth triumphs and struggles from the lens of Asian and Pacific Islander parents, elders, and family members

40

LGBTQ+ LEGAL & ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

School-based Programs: [GLSEN](#) and [PFLAG](#)

Advocacy Programs: [OutProud](#), [National Center for Transgender Equality](#), and [Pennsylvania Equality Project](#)

Legal resources: [Lambda Legal](#), [National Center for Lesbian Rights](#), [Transgender Law Center](#)

Right to Be's guide: [Know Your Rights](#)

41

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS OF LGBTQ+ TEENS

- Trevor Project's [Guide to Being an Ally](#) and [Guide to LGBTQ+ Youth Suicide Prevention](#)
- Caregiver AFFIRM: evidence-based, group program for caregivers of LGBTQ+ youth, currently offered for free virtually to any caregiver through the [Hugh Lane Wellness Center](#)

42

