

SOCIAL MEDIA AND OUR MENTAL HEALTH



Grades 8-12

Social Media and our Mental Health

Health Education & Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies & Visual Arts

Purpose of the Lesson:

Social media can be used for a variety of reasons: staying connected, activism, promoting ideas/businesses, etc. However, some of the pitfalls of social media can have negative implications for students. This lesson explores ways to encourage students to have positive relationships with social media and delves into the impact social media can have on our students' mental health and wellbeing. Using visual art, the students will explore what their values are and how these values can support positive social media interactions.

Curriculum Competencies:

Health Education

- Propose strategies for developing and maintaining healthy relationships (Grade 8)
- Create strategies for promoting the health and well-being of the school and community (Grade 8/9)
- Analyze the potential effects of social influences on health (Grade 10)
- Use applicable communication skills when interacting with others (Grade 11/12)

Applied Design, Skills and Technologies

- Identify the personal, social, and environmental impacts, including unintended negative consequences, of the choices they make about technology use (Grade 8/9/10/11/12)

Visual Arts

- Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society and belonging through arts activities and experiences (Grade 8/9)
- Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of personal, social, cultural, historical, and environmental contexts in relation to the arts (Grade 8/9)
- Interpret and communicate ideas using symbols and elements to express meaning through the arts (Grade 8)

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Visual Arts

- Interpret and communicate ideas using symbols and elements to express meaning through the arts (Grade 8)
- Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas, and experiences (Grade 8/9/10/11/12)
- Revise, refine, analyze and document creative works and experiences (Grade 9)
- Demonstrate respect for themselves, others, and the audience (Grade 9)
- Create personally meaningful artistic works that demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of social, cultural, environmental and historical contexts (Grade 9/10)
- Express meaning, intent and emotion through visual art (Grade 10)
- Communicate ideas through art making (Grade 10)
- Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and place through making art (Grade 11/12)
- Communicate ideas and express emotions through making art (Grade 11)
- Create artistic works to reflect personal voice, story and values (Grade 11/12)

First Peoples Principles of Learning:

- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Video

[Impact of Social Media on Youth - Katanu Mbevi](#)

Guiding Questions:

- Have you ever felt these stressors connected with your social media use?
- How many hours per day, on average, would you say you spend on social media?
- How many hours per day, on average, would you say you THINK about social media?
- Do you feel like this time impacts your mental health/wellness?

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Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Preparation: Queue up video/set up projector

1. Begin the lesson by watching the video “Impact of Social Media on Youth.” This can be found [HERE](#). This video discusses how social media can bring on certain stressors for young people.

2. Pause the video and use the Guiding Questions to spark discussion.

3. Have your students break off into groups. Get them to discuss the concepts of “highlight reels”, “social media currency” and “FOMO” (fear of missing out) with their peers. Invite them to ask each other questions about instances where they’ve experienced/interacted with these concepts on social media and how it made them feel. Come back to a whole-class discussion to debrief about these concepts. Keep track of keywords regarding how these concepts have made your students feel on the board.

4. Go over the keywords on the board with your class. Discuss with them how these feelings can impact their overall mental health and wellbeing. Explain to them that, while social media can be a great source of connection, it can also create issues in terms of comparison.

5. Explain the curriculum connections to your students. Explain to them that they are going to create a visual representation of their values, as discussed in the video. Have them brainstorm what values are important to them in connection to social media. Pose these questions to get them thinking about it:

- What benefits do you notice about being on social media?
- What kind of information do you like seeing on your social media?
- What connections are formed/maintained through social media?

Use the image from the video as inspiration for their art pieces, but inform them that they can use whatever visual arts medium they want to represent these values.

You can pause the video at the timestamp **4:38** and project the image on the screen of the example of the values presented by the speaker.

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Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

6. Follow-up Activity: Invite the students to share their art pieces with partners, in small groups, or with the class. Suggest that students pose engaging questions to their peers about their art pieces.

Examples of questions they could ask each other:

- How do these values reflect your social media usage?
- Which of these values do you hope to bring more into your social media usage and relationships?
- Where do these values overlap with other areas of your life?

7. Lesson Closure: Facilitate a whole-class discussion about the activity. Allow the students to reflect on their experience in creating these art pieces and share their art pieces with the whole class, if they want to. **Ask the students how they can use these values to better inform their social media usage.**