

SOCIAL MEDIA AND OUR MENTAL HEALTH



Social Media and our Mental Health

Grades 8-12

Health Education & Applied Design, Visual Arts, Information and Communication Technology

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 and Physical Education:

- Personal and Social Management:
 - Grade 8
 - K.4.8.A.1: Examine the effects of stereotyping based on a variety of factors (e.g., gender, age, race, roles, media influences, body type, sexual orientation, source of income...), and ways (e.g., set/review personal and group norms, standards...) to promote acceptance of self and others
 - K.4.8.A.2a: Develop self-monitoring strategies (e.g., keep a journal, participate with a friend...) and criteria (e.g., believable, achievable, controllable, within timelines...) in setting individual and/or group goals
 - K.4.8.A.3: Describe the social factors that affect the decision-making/problem-solving process in group situations
 - K.4.8.B.1a: Describe behaviours that show social responsibility and respect for diversity (e.g., showing respect toward officials and other players, inviting others to play, greeting others, helping others who are experiencing difficulty...) in different contexts (e.g., sports, physical activity participation, classroom settings...)
 - K.4.8.B.2b: Identify roles and responsibilities in developing positive relationships
 - K.4.8.B.1b: Discuss personal participation and responsibilities in physical activities and/or social events for the promotion of inclusion and cultural diversity in communities
 - K.4.8.C.1a: Identify how self (e.g., accepting one's feelings...), peers (e.g., listening supportively...), and the community (e.g., providing resources for support when needed...) contribute to the enhancement of personal health and well-being

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- K.4.8.C.2: Explain how stress may have positive or negative consequences (e.g., fight or flight, productivity, illness...)
- K.4.8.C.3: Examine the effects of stress (e.g., increased blood pressure, elevated heart rate, muscle soreness, nausea...) and relaxation (e.g., low blood pressure and heart rate...) on body systems (e.g., digestive, cardiovascular, endocrine...).
- K.4.8.C.4a: List healthy strategies (e.g., seeking support from others and community resources, positive self- talk, physical exercise...) and unhealthy strategies (e.g., smoking, alcohol misuse, isolation, fighting...) for dealing with stress and/or anxiety.
- Grade 9:
 - K.4.S1.A.1: Examine personal strengths, values, and strategies for achieving individual success and a positive self-image
 - K.4.S1.A.3: Examine factors that affect self and/or others in making decision regarding active healthy lifestyles and/or career building
 - K.4.S1.B.1a: Describe ways to treat others for developing healthy and meaningful relationships
 - K.4.S1.B.2b: Identify appropriate social behaviours for developing meaningful interpersonal relationships
 - K.4.S1.B.3b: Examine effects of conflicts and the importance of seeing diverse sides of issues in developing meaningful personal and/or team relationships
 - S.4.S1.A.3: Apply interpersonal skills in case scenarios related to developing close, meaningful relationships
 - S.4.S1.A.4: Apply conflict-resolution strategies in different case scenarios for understanding different perspectives and points of view
- Grade 10:
 - K.4.S2.C.1a: Describe the behaviours necessary for providing others with support and promoting emotional health and well-being
 - S.4.S2.A.3: Apply communication skills and strategies in case scenarios for getting along with others in a variety of contexts

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- Grade 11 (Module C: Mental-Emotional Health):
 - 11.MH.1 Identify and apply positive health strategies to deal with issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, and eating disorders.
 - 11.MH.2 Examine media influence(s) on self-image and behavior
 - 11.MH.3 Investigate the impact and importance of active healthy lifestyle practices on mental-emotional health issues
 - 11.MH.4 Examine the signs and symptoms of mental-emotional health issues related to stress, anxiety, depression, and eating disorders
 - 11.MH.5 Identify community service agencies that support individuals concerned about mental-emotional health issues.
 - 11.MH.6: Apply problem-solving and decision-making strategies in case scenarios related to selected mental-emotional health issues
- Healthy Lifestyle Practices:
 - Grade 8:
 - K.5.8.A.1: Examine positive and negative health habits of daily living for self and/or others (e.g., daily physical activity, skin care, hygiene, dental hygiene, rest, caring for others, handling/sharing of food/beverages, tobacco use...)
- Healthy Relationships
 - Grade 12:
 - 12.HR.1: Demonstrate understanding of the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships, and discuss factors that might influence their development

Visual Arts:

- GLO: The overarching goal of the visual arts curriculum is to support, nurture, and inspire the growth of every learner as an artist and as an artful learner through: making (VA-M), creating (VA-CR), connecting (VA-C), and responding (VA-R).
 - VA-M1: The learner develops competencies for using elements and principles of artistic designs in a variety of contexts
 - VA-M1.3 (Grades 9-12): selecting, combining, and manipulating art elements and principles to solve artistic problems and challenges
 - VA-M1.4 (Grades 9-12): exploring contemporary approaches to designing, composing, or structuring works of art and visual culture

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- VA-M2: The learner develops competencies for using visual art media, tools, techniques, and processes in a variety of contexts by
 - VA-M2.2 (Grades 9-12): experimenting with a variety of art media, tools, techniques, and processes to develop intentions and preferences
 - VA-M2.3 (Grades 9-12): selecting and using diverse art media, tools, techniques, and processes in varied ways to develop technical and creative facility and to represent artistic intentions
 - VA-M2.4 (Grades 9-12): extending, integrating, and refining artmaking competencies using: a variety of personally selected media, a range of techniques and processes, and various tools and digital and virtual technologies
- VA-CR1: The learner generates ideas for creating art using a variety of sources
 - VA-CR.1.1 (Grades 4-8): Draw inspiration from personal experiences and relevant sources to ignite ideas and questions for art creation
 - VA-CR.1.2 (Grades 4-8): Engage in collaborative idea generation/brainstorming as inspiration for art creation
 - VA-CR.1.1 (Grades 9-12): drawing inspiration from personal experiences and relevant sources
 - VA-CR.1.5 (Grades 9-12): engaging in collaborative idea generation as inspiration and fuel for moving ideas forward
- VA-CR2: The learner develops original artworks, integrating ideas and art elements, principles, and media
 - VA-CR.2.1 (Grades 4-8): Experiment with art elements, principles, and media to test and elaborate ideas
 - VA-CR.3.4 (Grade 4): Work collaboratively to create and share group art projects
 - VA-CR.2.3 (Grade 9-12): engaging in cycles of experimentation and idea generation to consider possibilities and test out and elaborate ideas
 - VA-CR.2.4 (Grades 9-12): analyzing and adapting creatively to evolving relationships between form (media and design) and idea, intent, and/or purpose
 - VA-CR.2.5 (Grades 9-12): defining and solving creative challenges that emerge in the artmaking process
 - VA-CR.2.6 (Grades 9-12): selecting, synthesizing, and organizing promising ideas, elements, and media to develop original artwork and to support intention

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- VA-C2: The learner develops understandings about the influence and impact of the visual arts
 - VA-C.2.1 (Grades 9-12): examining ways that visual arts and artists influence personal growth, identity, and relationships with others
 - VA-C.2.2 (Grades 9-12): examining the impact of context (e.g., personal, social, artistic, cultural, political, economic, geographical, environmental, historical, technological) on visual arts and artists
 - VA-C.2.3 (Grades 9-12): examining how visual arts and artists influence, comment on, question, and challenge social, political, and cultural discourse and identity

- VA-C3: The learner demonstrates an understanding of the roles, purposes, and meanings of the visual art in the lives of individuals and in communities
 - VA-C.3.1 (Grades 4-8): Demonstrate an appreciation of art as a means of experiencing and exploring own and others' lives (eg. feelings, values, stories, events, cultures)
 - VA-C.3.5 (Grades 4-8): Demonstrate an awareness of ways in which visual arts reflect, influence, and shape issues and events, as well as traditions, values, beliefs, and identities of individuals and groups
 - VA-C.3.1 (Grades 9-12): exploring how art and artists make and communicate meaning and create unique and new ways to know self and to perceive the world
 - VA-C.3.2 (Grades 9-12): examining how visual arts can be a means of sharing diverse viewpoints and of understanding the perspectives of others
 - VA-C.3.3 (Grades 9-12): examining ways that visual arts reflect, interpret, and record traditions, values, beliefs, issues, and events in society and culture
 - VA-C.3.4 (Grades 9-12): analyzing the multiple roles and purposes of art for individuals and society (e.g., celebration, persuasion, education, commemoration, commentary, recreation, therapy, religious/artistic/cultural expression)

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- VA-R4: The learner constructs meaning and applies new understandings from art experiences
 - VA-R.4.4 (Grades 4-8): Identify ways that art contributes to personal, social, cultural, and artistic identity
 - VA-R.4.6 (Grades 9-12): identifying ways that visual arts contribute to personal, social, cultural, and artistic identity

Information and Communication Technology Courses:

- *Specific Learning Outcomes Common to All Courses (Senior Years ICT)*
 - 9. Apply safety guidelines when communicating electronically. (Examples: email, web pages, threaded discussions, videoconferences, chats, instant messages, camera phones, wikis, blogs, podcasts, online whiteboards...) (E-2.2)
 - 10. Explain consequences of unethical behaviour. (Examples: cyberbullying, promotion of prejudice and hatred, copyright violations, plagiarism, wilful destruction/manipulation of data, hacking, propagation of viruses, spamming, software piracy, consumer fraud, identity theft...) (E-2.3)
 - 11. Apply guidelines for ethical and responsible use of ICT. (Examples: respect others' privacy, protect personal information, follow security procedures, respect intellectual property and credit sources, use licensed software, discourage cyberbullying, collect data ethically, analyze information ethically...) (E-2.4)
 - 12. Evaluate effects of personal ICT behaviour on others. (E-3.1)
 - 13. Weigh personal benefits and risks of using ICT. (E-3.2)
 - 14. Analyze various ICT skills and competencies required in personal career choices. (S-2.2)
 - 15. Analyze advantages and disadvantages of ICT use in society. (Examples: lack of access, consequences of unethical use, ease of manipulating data, ease of communicating information, addictive/obsessive behaviour...) (S-2.3)

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Indigenous Perspectives:

- General Inclusive Aboriginal Perspectives:
 - All students will be treated with dignity and respect, and recognition will be given that all students have gifts that can be shared with others
 - Student motivation should be provided through intrinsic rather than extrinsic means
 - Curriculum materials will be made relevant to the students who are learning it
 - Experiential learning opportunities will be used when possible and appropriate
 - Members of the family and community will be involved in the education of students
 - Elders will be invited to share their knowledge and wisdom with the students
 - Traditional knowledge, histories, values, and cultures of Aboriginal peoples will be included in the classroom

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.**