



Understanding Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction

The online world can be a fun place to connect with friends, learn new things, find inspiration, and explore. While social media can have positive effects on mental health, it can also be harmful if not used with caution. Cyberbullying and social media addiction are two things that many young people are struggling with today. Let's talk about what these issues are and how you can stay safe online while still enjoying the good parts of social media.

What Is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that happens online, through social media, texting, or even in games. Cyberbullying can look like:

- Mean comments or hurtful messages.
- Excluding someone from a group chat or online game.
- Spreading rumors or lies about someone.
- Sharing inappropriate or embarrassing pictures or videos without permission.
- Threats or telling someone to hurt themselves.

Cyberbullying can take a huge toll on people's mental health. Some kids might feel sad, lonely, or even scared because of it. It's important to know that cyberbullying is not okay, and it's never your fault if it happens to you.

If you notice someone is being cyberbullied, **speak up** or tell an adult you trust. Being kind online and supporting each other can help stop cyberbullying and make the internet a safer and more positive place for everyone.

What Is Social Media Addiction?

Have you ever tried to put your phone down, but found yourself checking it again and again? It can be a problem when you feel like you can't stop using social media, even when you know you should. Here are some more signs that your social media use might be affecting your mental health:

- You're losing sleep because you're on your phone late at night.
- You're not spending enough time with friends or family in real life because you're online so often.
- You're not as interested in hobbies or activities you used to enjoy because you'd rather be on social media.
- You are comparing yourself to the people you see online, which is poorly affecting your self-esteem and confidence.



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If this sounds like you, it's okay! The first step is recognizing how your social media use is affecting you. Try cutting down on your screen time little by little, you can even set a daily time limit on certain apps which can make this easier. You can also ask a friend or family member to help keep you on track with your phone usage.

How to Use Social Media in a Positive Way

The good news is, social media isn't all bad! When used the right way, it can help you:

- Stay connected with friends.
- Learn new things, get inspired, or find support if you're going through a tough time.
- Express yourself and share what makes you happy.

To use social media in a way that's good for your mental health, try these tips:

1. **Check in with yourself:** Be aware of how much time you're spending online and how social media makes you feel. Make sure you're not on devices so often that it interferes with your everyday life. Take breaks to go outside, talk to friends in person, or enjoy a hobby.
2. **Be kind online.** Make sure you're using social media to lift others up, not tear them down.
3. **Talk to a trusted adult** if you feel like social media is overwhelming your daily life or if you're being bullied. It's important to get help when you need it.

What You Can Do to Help Yourself and Others

It's up to everyone to make the internet a safe place. Whether it's standing up to cyberbullying, taking breaks from social media, or making sure we're being kind online, we all have an important role to play.



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Here's how you can make a difference:

- **Be a positive influence.** If you see someone being cyberbullied, reach out to them to show your support and let them know that it isn't their fault.
- **Take care of yourself.** If social media is making you feel bad, it's okay to step away for a bit.
- **Talk about it.** If you're feeling anxious or upset about something that happened online, let a trusted adult know.

By making smart choices online, you can protect your mental health and help others do the same!

Need more help?

Talk to a teacher, counsellor, or parent/guardian if you're struggling with anything online. There are also lots of resources available to guide you, like this one from our Student Mental Health Toolkit: **[Social Media Hiatus: Why It's Important to Take Breaks from Social Media](#)**

Stay safe and take care of your well-being, both online and offline.

References:

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