

# Cyberbullying and the Internet: Helpful strategies for families



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Hamilton

# CYBERBULLYING AND INTERNET USE: HELPFUL STRATEGIES FOR FAMILIES



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# Let us know ...

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*What concerns you about children/teens' internet use?*

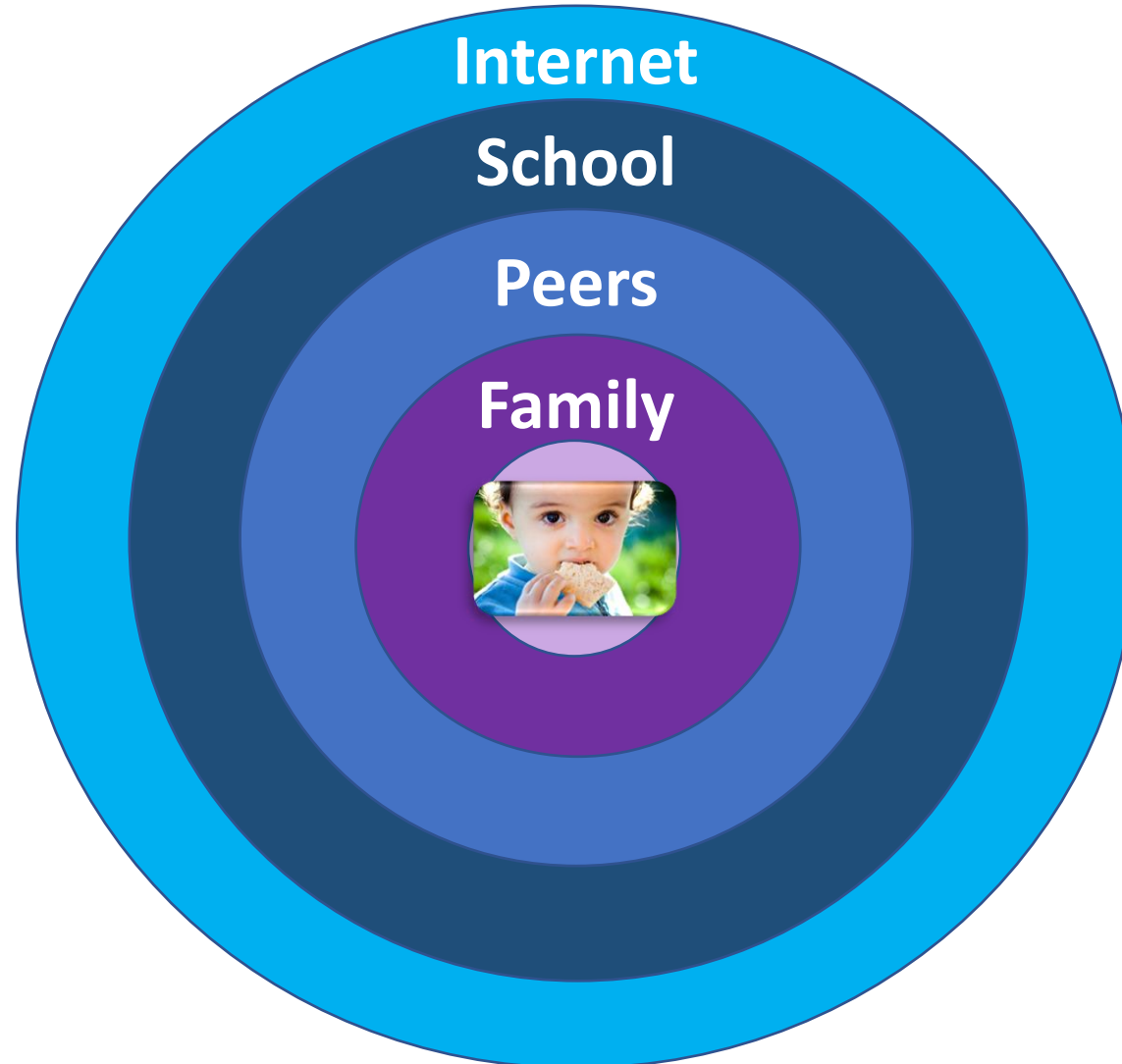


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# Human Development



# What's going on online?

42% 

**Birth to 4 years** have access to their own smartphone

41% 

**5 to 9 years** have access to their own smartphone

55% 

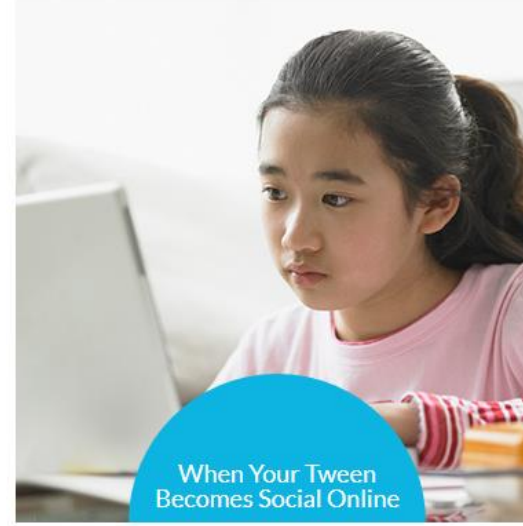
**10 to 13 years** have access to their own smartphone

77% 

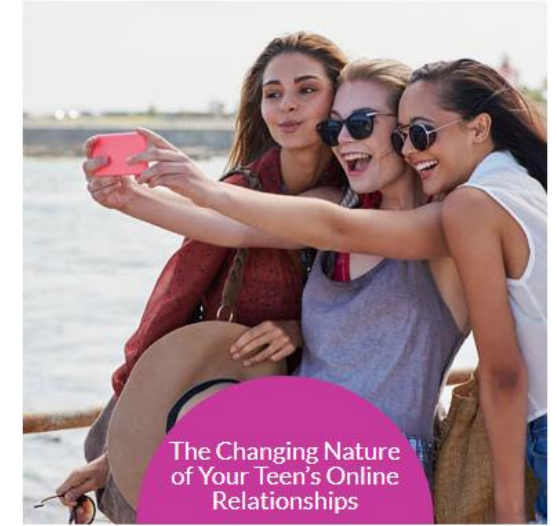
**14 to 15 years** have access to their own smartphone



- Kids are not too interested in socializing
- Love to watch YouTube videos, TV shows, and play solitary games



- Tweens are focused on quantity over quality of friendships
- Number friends, likes, comments and "followers" are a big draw for them



- Socializing online is extremely important to teens
- They are searching for intimacy in friendships & engaging in their first romantic relationships



# What's going on online?



**Birth to 4 years** have access to their own smartphone



**5 to 9 years** have access to their own smartphone



# What's going on online?



**10 to 13 years** have access to their own smartphone



**14 to 15 years** have access to their own smartphone



# What's going on online?



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# What's going on online?



When Your Tween  
Becomes Social Online

- Tweens are focused on quantity over quality of friendships
- Number friends, likes, comments and “followers” are a big draw for them



# What's going on online?



The Changing Nature  
of Your Teen's Online  
Relationships

- Socializing online is extremely important to teens
- They are searching for intimacy in friendships & engaging in their first romantic relationships



# Screen-time

- Biggest predictor of children's screen-time is parents' screen-time
- American Academy of Pediatrics recommends < 2hrs/day for children between 2 – 5 years
- Screen-time is difficult to measure for older children, teens and adults. More research is required in this area

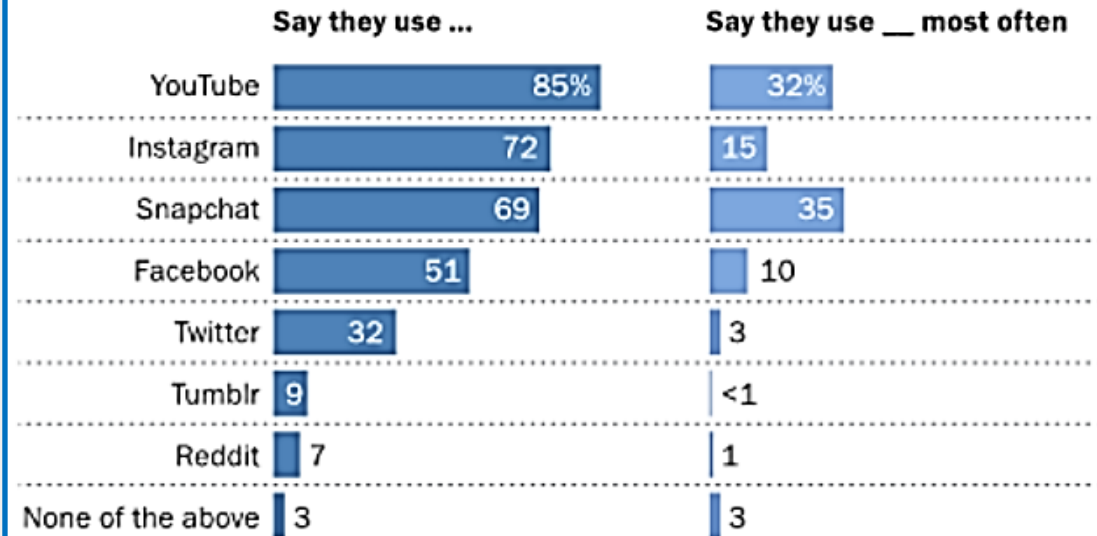


# What's going on online?

Among 13 to 17 year-olds,  
95% have their own or  
access to a cell phone &  
are using ...

## YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat are the most popular online platforms among teens

*% of U.S. teens who ...*



Note: Figures in first column add to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed. Question about most-used site was asked only of respondents who use multiple sites; results have been recalculated to include those who use only one site. Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 10, 2018.

"Teens, Social Media & Technology 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

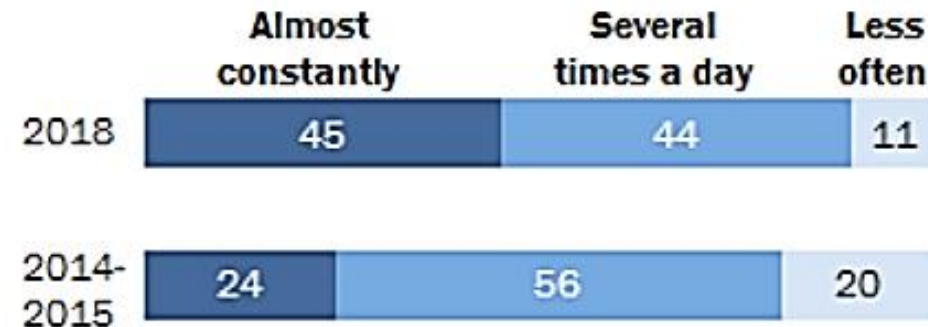


# What's going on online?

**Among 13 to 17 year-olds, 95% have their own or access to a cell phone & are using ...**

## 45% of teens say they're online almost constantly

*% of U.S. teens who say they use the internet, either on a computer or a cellphone ...*



Note: "Less often" category includes teens who say they use the internet "about once a day," "several times a week" and "less often."

Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 10, 2018. Trend data from previous Pew Research Center survey conducted 2014-2015.

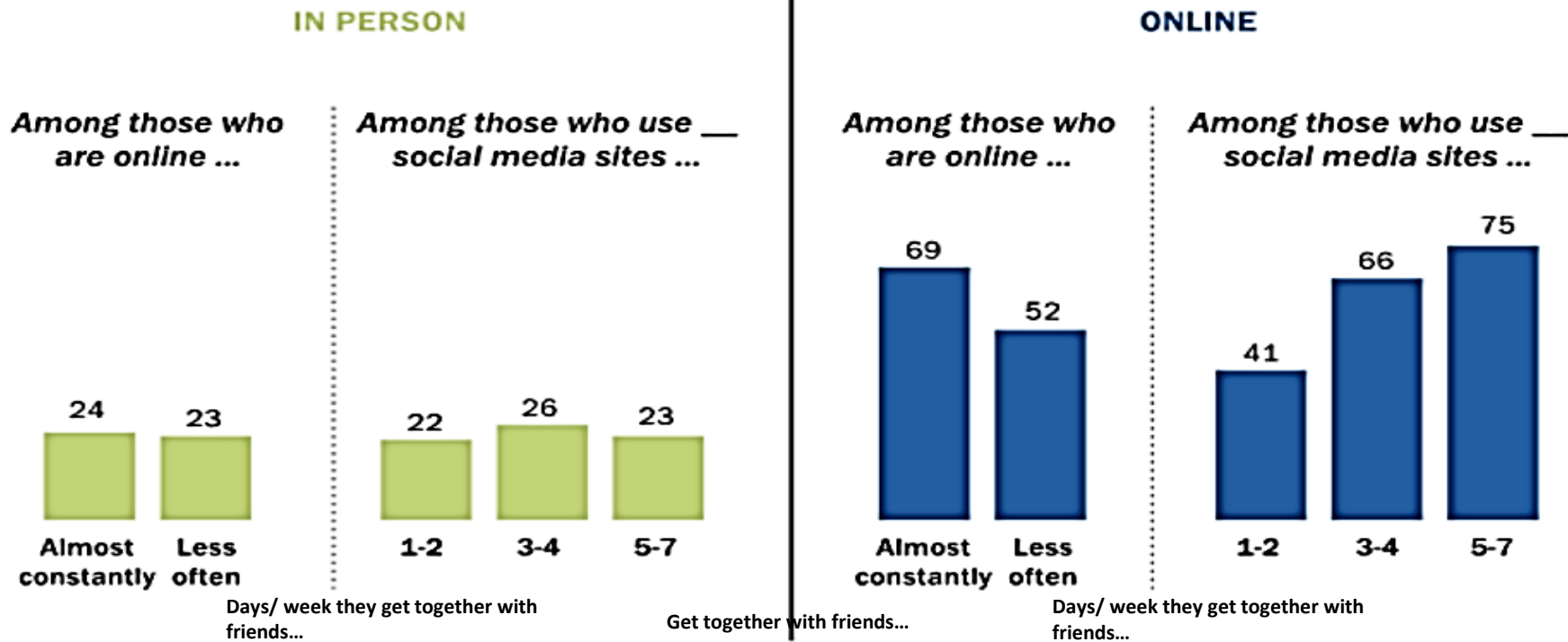
"Teens, Social Media & Technology 2018"

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# Friends & Peers

**Teens who use the internet 'almost constantly' are as likely to socialize with their friends offline as their peers who are online less frequently**

*% of U.S. teens who say they get together with their friends daily or almost every day IN PERSON (outside of school)/ONLINE*



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown.  
Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 10, 2018.

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# Friends & Peers

**Constantly  
online teens  
are more likely  
to report both  
positive and  
negative  
experiences on  
social media**

*% of U.S. teens who say what they see on social media makes them feel the following "a lot"*

### POSITIVE FEELINGS

Online less frequently      Online almost constantly

More connected to what's going on in their friends' lives



Like they have a place where they can show their creative side



Like they have people who can support them through tough times



More in touch with friends' feelings



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown.  
Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 10, 2018.

# Friends & Peers

For **BOTH** teens and adults, social media and the internet helps

- Maintain stronger social ties
- Keep in touch with friends daily
- Form closer interpersonal relationships
- Receive support from others

Important for fostering:

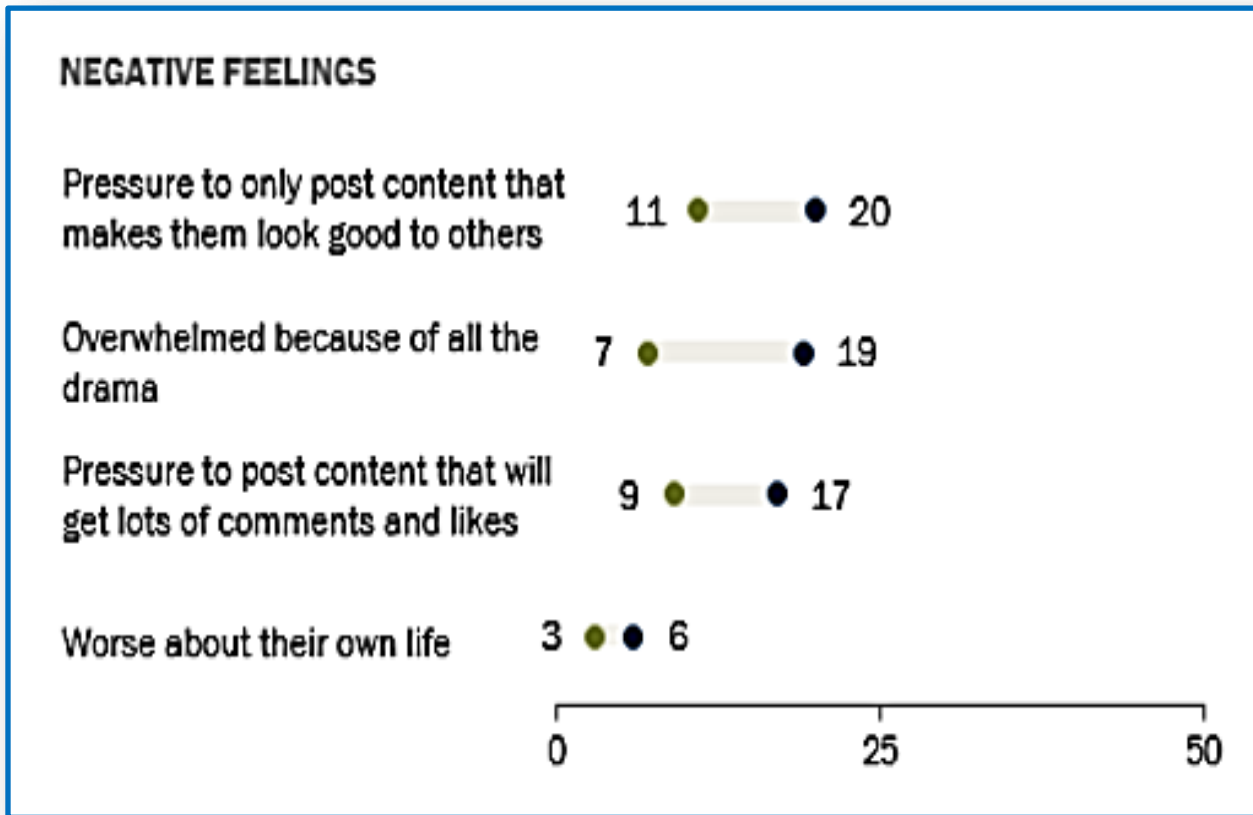
- feelings of belonging,
- social skills,
- sense of self & identity
- explore





# Friends & Peers

Constantly online teens are more likely to report both positive and negative experiences on social media



These reasons make sense and are perfectly normal even before the Internet existed

**When do these negative feelings become problematic?**

*% of U.S. teens who say what they see on social media makes them feel the following "a lot"*

# Friends, Peers & Self-Esteem

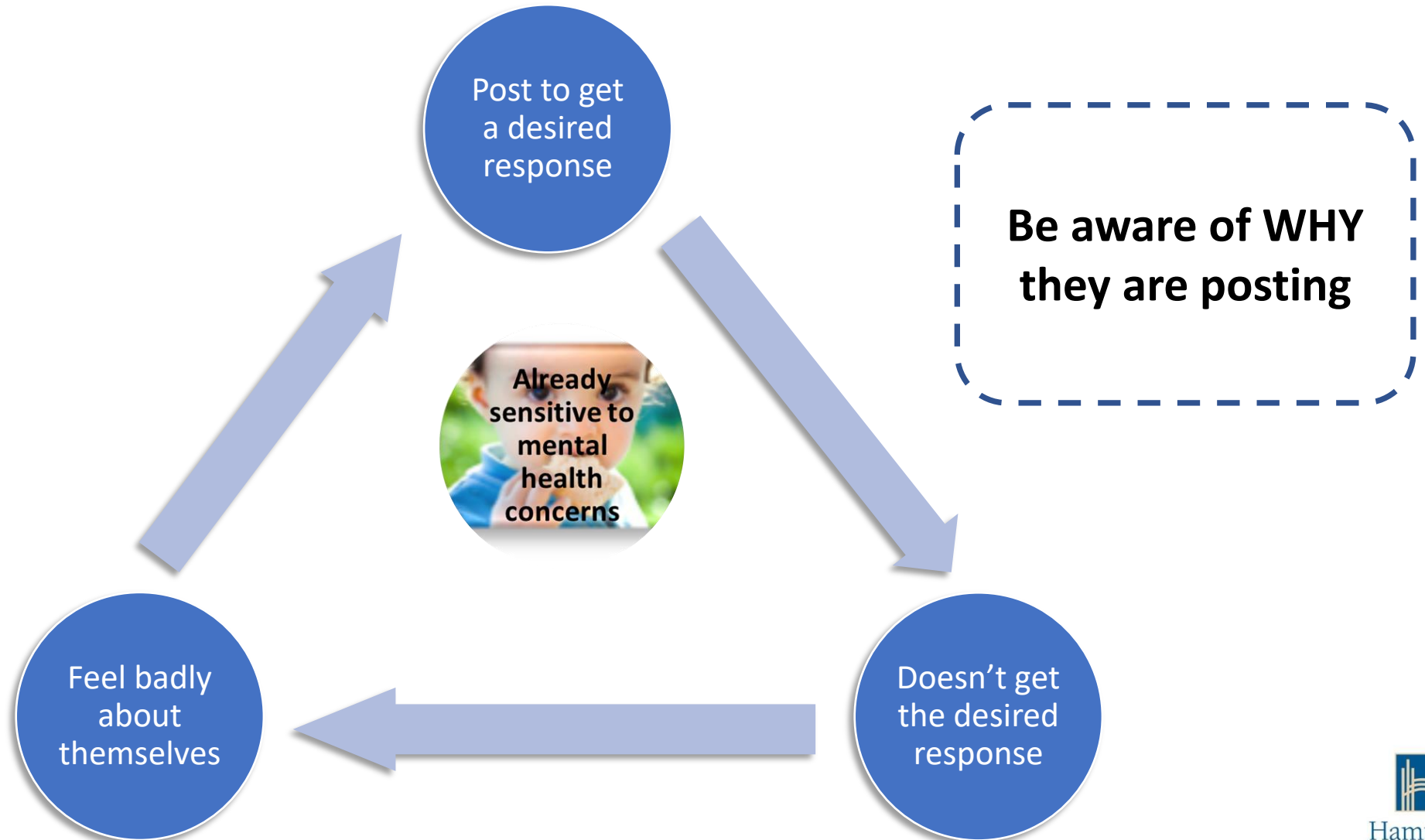
- **Pressure to post content that makes them look good**
- **Pressure to post content that will get comments and likes**

Becomes a  
problem when  
teens are

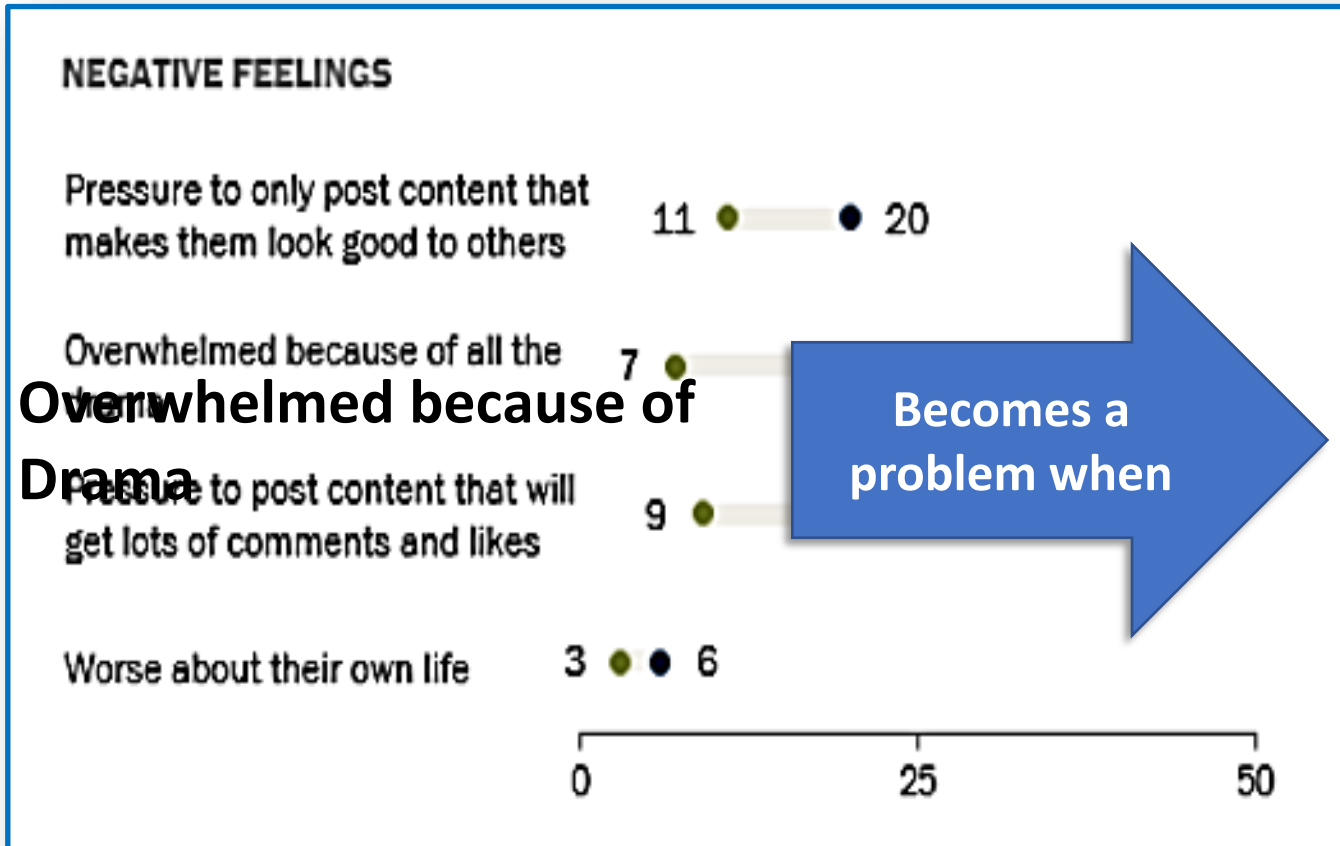
- **Depending on these things to make themselves feel better**
- **Basing their self-esteem on positive reinforcement from others**
- **Already sensitive to mental health concerns (i.e. anxiety, depression)**



# Friends, Peers & Self-Esteem



# Friends, Peers & Cyberbullying



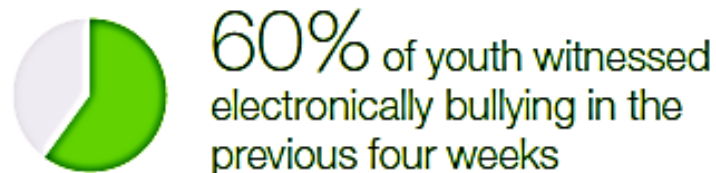
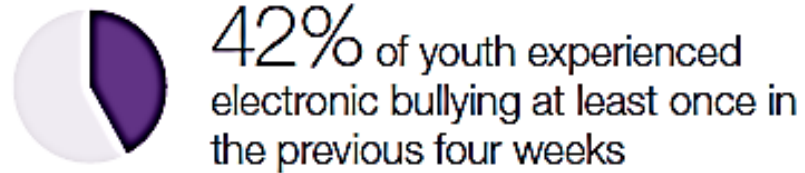
- Drama turns into bullying behaviour online (and offline).
- Cyberbullying comprised of 4 components:
  - 1) Is intentionally aggressive
  - 2) Is carried out repeatedly
  - 3) There is an imbalance of power
  - 4) Occurs through electronic technologies

# Friends, Peers & Cyberbullying

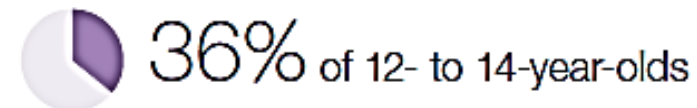
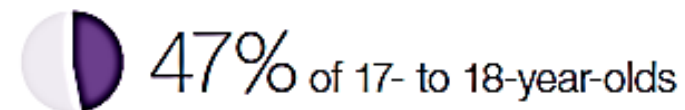
Boys were significantly more likely than girls to experience electronic bullying



Boys were also significantly more likely than girls to say they had electronically bullied



Older youth were significantly more likely than younger youth to experience electronic bullying



# Friends, Peers & Cyberbullying

## Intervening

71%

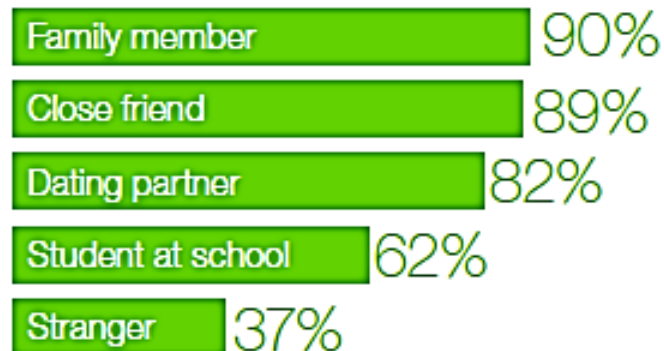


of those who saw electronic bullying did something to intervene at least once

Respondents' willingness to intervene was not affected by their gender or age

## Youth are very protective of family

Their likelihood of intervening when the target is:



## Highest rated intervention strategies

comfort  
the target privately

tell  
a trusted adult

talk  
about how to handle it  
with parents and/or friends

## Lowest rated intervention strategies

Read it and  
do nothing  
or laugh at it

**This is great news and great progress!!**



# Friends, Peers & Cyberbullying

## Motivations and Barriers

What would make youth more likely to intervene?

If the electronic bullying was clearly wrong 87%

If they knew intervening would make a difference 85%

If they could intervene anonymously 81%

What worries prevent youth from intervening?

Worry they will turn themselves into targets 67%

Worry it will make things worse for the target 53%



# Friends, Peers & Cyberbullying

## Role of Adults

Youth are not fully convinced that adults will be helpful

33%



of youth **do not intervene** because they think adults do not give advice that helps

43%



of youth agree that talking to parents and teachers **will not change anything**

However, the #2 and #3 top-rated intervention strategies involved talking to adults:

Tell a trusted adult 74%

Talk about how to handle it with parents 73%

**Teens want to tell parents/adults what's going on – but they don't think adults know how to handle it properly and could make it worse**





# Children/Youth Voices

Children and youth feel that parents and caregivers don't understand, and that being online is a necessity

*"I have to use social media so that I fit in with others at my school"*

*"Sometimes I wish I didn't have to respond so quickly without getting my friend mad"*

*"I just want to play the game"*

*"I enjoy being online and having my own time"*

*"Having access to online is a big support for me"*

# Children/Youth's Worries

## Children and youth are worried that:

- Their phone or tablet will be taken away
- No way of staying in touch with their peers
- Their caregivers won't understand
- That they will be punished for what another person has done

*“If I tell \_\_\_\_\_, they won't let me go on my tablet anymore and get mad at me”*

- That by disengaging in on-line chats, they will be targeted



# Caregiver Voices

## Caregivers have mentioned that they are worried about

- Cyberbullying
- Their child being influenced or pressured to engage in:
  - Sexting
  - Influenced to engage in harmful behaviors towards self/others
- Sharing of personal information

*“I want them to be safe”*

*“I notice the impact on their emotional and mental health”*

*“I don’t like what other people are saying to them”*

*“the social media time takes up all of their free time”*



# Caregivers

**Parents are understandably concerned and some want to protect their children by:**

- Installing monitoring software
- Overly restricting or controlling technology use
- Taking devices away if their children are experiencing cyberbullying

**These methods:**

- **Are usually temporary**
- **Miss opportunities for children/youth to learn about responsibilities**
- **Reduce the chances that children/youth will tell caregivers that something is wrong**



# Caregivers

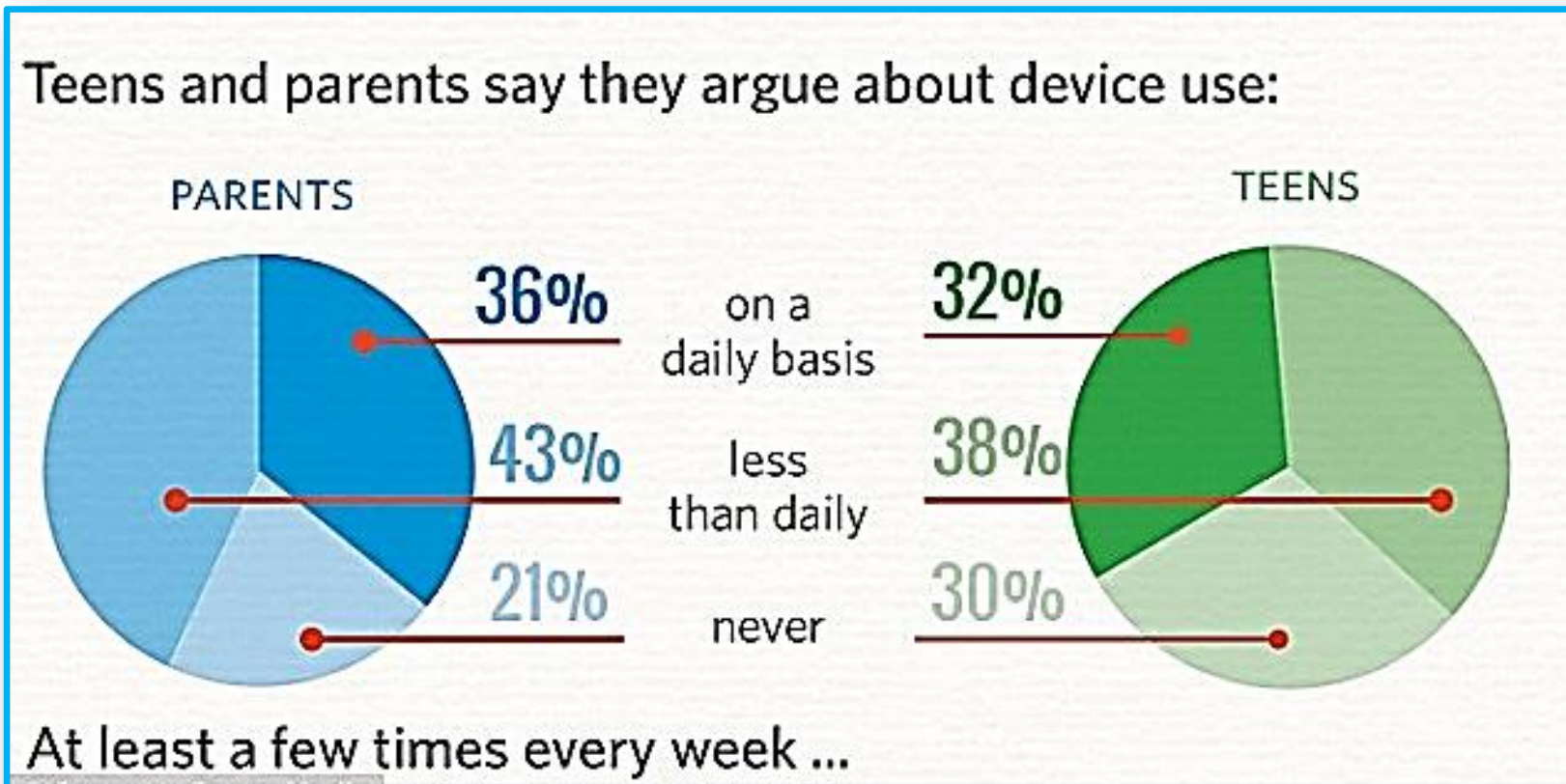
An approach that supports staying connected is to:

Understand that bullying is a relationship problem not a technology problem



# Caregivers

You and your child(ren) are not alone in this struggle!



# Caregivers

**You and your child(ren) are not alone in this struggle!**

## **Sources of Conflict:**

Parents told us that the biggest sources of conflict across all age categories are:

- 1) **Excessive use of digital devices** (screen time) 43%
- 2) **Rules on how children use their devices** (for schoolwork, to play games) 28%
- 3) **What children are doing on their devices** (sites they can and cannot access on the internet) 19%



# Caregivers

So, try to:

- Remember that what your child is going through is a normal part of growing-up
- establish common ground/understanding





# Caregiver Tools: Ages 5-12

## Structure and Supervision

- Provide the level of structure and supervision that meets your child's individual need
- Collaborate around setting the amount of time electronics are used
  - Involve your child in negotiating time limits
  - Give 10 minute reminders
- Let them know that this is not a consequence, but rather that you are you are taking your job to care for them very seriously
- Eyes on Supervision: helps children feel safe and get into less trouble
  - Reduce supervision as they are able to demonstrate safe internet use and self control

# Caregiver Tools: Ages 5-12

## Creative Consequences

- **Match the consequence to the situation and behaviour** – ensure that it makes sense to the child
- **Be creative**, instead of losing a privilege or grounding, try ways they can “make it up”.
- **Avoid isolating. Experiment with Time In rather than Time Out**
  - Time-in: Have the child near you
  - Time-out: if needed, be brief, non-rejecting, and available to your child during their time out
  - If grounded from device(s), spend positive time together, or offer an alternative activity

# Caregiver Tools: Ages 12-18

## Open communication

- **Listen openly without judgement**
- **Engage in positive dialogue without demanding to know everything they are doing**
  - respect their privacy
  - Helps to reduce pressure on youth so they will come to you when they are in trouble as this will minimize their worry that you will 'freak out'
  - Talk about content they may encounter
- **Practice Active Listening**
  - Listen to your youth – let them finish venting
  - Encourage dialogue
  - Acknowledge and express understanding of their emotional experience - Empathy
  - Some sample sentence starters to use:
    - “It seems like you feel \_\_\_ when you are \_\_\_\_”
    - Model labeling emotions, “I notice I am feeling \_\_\_\_\_ when you shared...”



# Caregiver Tools: Ages 12-18

- **The power of independence**

- Try to allow them to exercise their independence
- Too much monitoring or controlling may lead to more risky behaviours online
- Discuss consequences of posting pictures and photos on social media openly

- **Family Media Plan**

- Come up with a plan and set rules together
- Have child research on 'app' and provide reason why they should have it
- This allows them to feel included and responsible, as well as feel that you are involved in a caring positive way

# Working Together

Work together with school communities to:

- Create a safe environment for children to share their concerns
- Develop a plan if students are having deeper struggles and stay consistent
- Visit [PREVNet.ca](https://PREVNet.ca) for more information
- If there are very serious things going on, contact your local police officer



# In Summary

- Using the Internet does not *cause* mental health issues
  - But they can contribute to these factors if:
    - Teens are already sensitive to it
    - Teens are going online to feel better about themselves
- Cyberbullying is a relationship issue; not a technology issue
- Try and foster open dialogue with your children that encourages them to want to share
- Come up with a **Family Media Plan** and set rules together
- Discuss the consequences of posting pictures and photos on social media with your teens



# Working Together

A word cloud featuring various positive attributes and values. The most prominent words are 'Respectful' (purple, top center), 'Caring' (green, bottom right), 'Encouraging' (blue, center), 'Supportive' (purple, vertical center), and 'Understanding' (green, bottom left). Other words include 'Open', 'Positive', 'Communication', 'Collaborative', 'Responsible', 'Empathy', 'Inspirational', 'Bonding', 'Helpful', 'Sharing', 'Respectful', 'Proud', 'Appreciative', 'Satisfied', 'Connecting', 'Co-operation', 'Commonality', 'Loving', 'Concerned', 'Fun', 'Consistency', 'Happy', 'Honest', 'Friendly', 'Reassuring', and 'Respectful'.



# Working Together



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# You are not Alone

For more information about responsible Internet use and resources check out:

## Media Smarts:

<http://mediasmarts.ca/>

## PREVNet:

<https://www.prevnet.ca/>

## Primus:

<http://cyberbullying.primus.ca/>

## Family Media Plan:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx>

## Information on Sexting

<http://mediasmarts.ca/search/sexting>

Danielle Law: [dlaw@wlu.ca](mailto:dlaw@wlu.ca)

