



Navigating Social Media

Materials:

- Worksheet

Brainstorm: How much time do you think the average teen spends on social media every day? Do you think that the time spent on social media is the same for boys and girls?

Discuss: You might be surprised to learn that according to the Common Sense study, which surveyed 2600 young people, teens are spending nearly 9 hours a day on social media. That's more than one-third of their day! And, especially during these last few years, 91% say that social media has been important for having fun, 84% for keeping up their mood and 83% for staying connected with family and friends. Teens are also using social media to learn how to do something new, create something and share it with friends and family. Social media has been instrumental in staying connected and socializing.

One big difference in the use of social media is between boys and girls. Over 70% of boys played video games with their friends online as compared to only 41% of girls. And, 40% of girls participated in video hangouts with their friends as compared to only 31% of boys.

With so much time spent on social media, we need to think about how it influences our perception of ourselves and the world around us. Studies show that social media use can become addictive. Although there are some risks, there are also some rewards. We need to learn to navigate this experience and make it work for us rather than against us.

Dive in! Let's talk about some guidelines that might help you make informed decisions about your social media.

- Set an intention! Before you start scrolling, think about why you are there. How am I feeling while I'm spending time on social media? How does what I'm seeing affect how I think about myself? My friends? My family?
- Set a time limit! A study published in the Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology indicates that people who limit their time on social media feel happier! Ask yourself a



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few questions so that you don't get lost in the social media vortex and loose hours of your day. What am I looking for? How long can I afford to spend time on social media right now?

- Does this make me happy? Be deliberate about what you choose to view. If it doesn't make you happy, why choose to follow it? Make a habit of limiting negative posts and comments, even if it means unfollowing, blocking or muting things or people that are upsetting.
- Remember your body budget and get enough sleep! The blue light from phones and tablets impacts our sleep patterns, so limit your screen time before bed.
- You're in charge! If social media is impacting your happiness, take charge and take a break. Do something that brings joy!

Activity Distribute copies of the worksheet. Explain: It's hard to make any decisions about changing habits if you don't have a baseline. This week, we're going to keep track of our social media activity. It's really up to you how much time you spend on social media, but if you don't really know how it's impacting your life, it's hard to make any changes. At the end of the week, we'll answer the reflection questions because we'll have more information to make a better decision.

Reflect: How much time do I spend on social media? Could I be spending too much time? If I were to decrease the amount of time I spend on social media, what might I do instead? How would this benefit me?

Extend and Enrich

Why is social media addictive? Have students research what the effects of social media have on the brain and present to the class their findings.

Stanford blog post

<https://scopeblog.stanford.edu/2021/10/29/addictive-potential-of-social-media-explained/>

Addiction Center <https://www.addictioncenter.com/drugs/social-media-addiction/>

Washington Post article July 19, 2021

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/07/19/social-media-addiction-social-science/%C3%A7>



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For Further Study

Social media and bullying

<https://cyberbullying.org/>

<https://www.stompoutbullying.org/>

<https://www.safekids.com/safety-advice-tools/>

<http://www.troll-busters.com/>

<https://www.ofsms.org/>

<https://www.childrenandscreens.com/>

Professional Development

How much time am I spending on social media? How does it make me feel? Is it bringing joy?

Could I be spending my time more productively?