

Improving your wellbeing with social media



CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 2023

6-12 February 2023

Let's Connect

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This year's Children's Mental Health Week is focusing on connections and one of the key ways we connect now is through social media.

The benefit of social networking is that it allows us to stay connected with friends and family. However like most things, there can be negatives too.

In this guide we'll point to ways you can use social media effectively helping improve your online wellbeing.



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Active and Passive Social Media Use

- Active use includes posting, liking, commenting on content, and interacting with others on social media, whereas passive use refers to browsing others' posts or content shared by friends without any liking, commenting, or interacting.
- Active use is associated with an increase in wellbeing, passive use is associated with a decrease in wellbeing.
- This is because active use involves connecting with people, researching ideas and learning new things whereas passive social media use is a numbing behavior and we often end up consuming media that we don't actually want to see.
- This can lead to a behaviour known as 'Doomscrolling' - when you constantly cycle through bad news on social media or the internet.
- There's a lot of negativity that you can absorb in just a few minutes of looking at your phone or laptop.



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What is the difference?

- Many of the most common social media apps can be used both actively and passively like Instagram, Snapchat, Tiktok, Facebook and Twitter.
- For example let's look at Instagram.
- **Passive** – browsing through someone's profile, viewing people's Instagram stories continually and scrolling through one's feed without commenting or liking any posts.
- This can be harmful as often we consume media we wouldn't choose to consume and we can end up subconsciously comparing ourselves to others.
- **Active** – creating and uploading pictures and videos, creating and uploading stories, interacting with other Instagram users through commenting, liking and sharing posts as well as chatting to users through direct messages .
- This can be positive and lead to a feeling of social connectedness and creativity through interacting with others and creating posts.



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Apps that are easier to use **Actively**

Spotify and Apple music – listening to music and/or podcasts is well accepted to be able to improve our mood and emotional well-being.

Duolingo – learning a new language or skill is one of the 5 ways to wellbeing.

Headspace/ Clearfear/ Calm – these mindfulness apps provide assisted meditation and allow the user to journal how they are feeling that day.

Whatsapp and Skype – apps that are used solely for connecting and communicating with other people increase our social relationships.

Remember – social media as a whole is not negative, it is important to be mindful how and why we are using it in order to look after our mental health and wellbeing.