

LCMS Counseling
December Newsletter 2019



All About Social Media

Websites

(click the links below to learn more)

- **Smart Social** Great resource with video and articles like:
 - [What is Snapchat? A parent guide.](#)
 - [TikTok App Guide for parents.](#)
 - [Beware: Fachat App](#)
 - [MeetMe App: Too Dangerous for Kids](#)
 - [Popular Teen App List for Parents and Teachers](#)- Rated for safety

- [Stop.Think.Connect. Parent and Educator Resources through Dept. of Homeland Security](#)
- [The Novus Project Resource Hub](#)

TED Talks

- [5 Ways Social Media is changing your brain right now](#)

Please be sure to check out Resources on the Los Cerritos Website Counseling Page for On-Line Resources, RecommendReading, Useful App's, Ted Talks.

<http://www.conejousd.org/loscerritos/Parents/Counseling/On-Line-Resources-Websites>

PodCasts on Social Media



[Click here for Ten to Twenty Podcast.](#)

Podcast with J.J. Cannon – @Sophie Takes a Selfie Author If you are considering giving or have already gotten your child a smartphone as a gift, you MUST listen to this podcast! Jennifer Cannon aka J.J. Cannon who wrote the book @Sophie Takes a Selfie joins us to discuss what you need to be teaching your child about their etiquette and behavior on social media sites as well as apps they may download and use. Join Kristen and Jen as they discuss: * Don't just hand your kid a phone without some idea of how to act * What's considered appropriate and inappropriate online behavior * What sites are the best and worst for your child * How to set guidelines for your tween as they get started We loved, loved having Jen on the podcast and know that you will get so much out of her humorous yet serious point of view on kids and social.



[Click Here for Their Own Devices Podcast](#)

ABOUT THEIR OWN DEVICES

No matter how tech savvy you are, your kids likely have you beat. Digital natives see the world in a fundamentally different way than all previous generations. This makes 21st century parenting an unprecedented challenge. Join Marc Groman, an Obama White House tech and privacy adviser, and David Reitman, an adolescent medical doctor, for candid discussions and helpful tips about screen time, social media, sexting, privacy, online gaming, and other challenges facing parents today. Marc and David aren't just experts – they're also married, and raising a teenage son of their own.

5 Ways Social Media Affects Teen Mental Health

By [Sherri Gordon](#) 

It should come as no surprise that the pressure to be available 24/7 on social media is a very real challenge for today's teenagers. Aside from the fact that their grasp of and [dependence on social media](#) far exceeds that of many adults, they also are using social media at much greater rates too. In fact, a report by Common Sense Media found that 75 percent of American teenagers have social media profiles. Social media is a daily part of life for the vast majority of teens.

A report by Common Sense found:

- 51 percent of teens visit social networking sites on a daily basis
- More than a third of teens visit their main social networking site several times a day.
- 1 in 4 teens is a heavy social media user, using at least two different types of social med each day.

How Does the Teen Brain Respond to Social Media?

For many teens, social media can become almost addictive. In a study by researchers at the [UCLA brain mapping center](#), they found that certain regions of teen brains became activated by "likes" on social media, sometimes causing them to want to use social media more.

During the [study](#), researchers used an fMRI scanner to image the brains of 32 teenagers as they used a fictitious social media app resembling Instagram. The teenagers were shown more than 140 images where "likes" were believed to be from their peers. However, the likes were actually assigned by the research team.

As a result, the brain scans revealed that in addition to a number of regions, the nucleus accumbens, part of the brain's reward circuitry, was especially active when they saw a large number of likes on their own photos. According to researchers, this area of the brain is the same region that responds when we see pictures of people we love or when we win money. What's more, researchers say that this reward region of the brain is particularly sensitive during the teen years, which could explain why teens are so drawn to social media.

In another part of the study, researchers could see a correlation between social media and [peer influence](#). Participants in the study were shown both neutral photos and risky photos. What they found is that the type of image had no impact on the number of likes given by teens in the study. Instead, they were likely to hit "like" on the popular photos regardless of what they showed.

Researchers believe this behavior shows that peers can have both a positive and negative influence on others while using social media.

What Impact Does Social Media Have on Mental Health?

Undoubtedly, social networking plays a vital role in broadening teen social connections and helping them learn valuable technical skills. But what impact is all of this social networking having on young teen minds? Most reports indicate that the impact can be significant.

Not only are teens' developing brains vulnerable to so much time online, but because they often have difficulty self-regulating their screen time, their risks can increase. Additionally, they are more susceptible to peer pressure, cyberbullying and [sexting](#) – all activities involving digital communication – making navigating the online social world treacherous at times.

All in all, there are a number of health issues that develop as a result of too much time online. Here is an overview of the most common [mental health-related issues](#) teens can experience from too much social media use.

Depression

Researchers are just beginning to establish a link between depression and social media. While they have not actually discovered a cause and effect relationship between social media and depression, they have discovered that social media use can be associated with an intensification of the symptoms of depression, including a decrease in social activity and an increase in loneliness.

For instance, a study published in *Computers in Human Behavior* found that the use of multiple social media sites is more strongly associated with depression than the amount of time spent online. According to the study, people who used more than seven social media platforms had more than three times the risk of depression than people who used two or fewer sites.

What's more, several additional studies have shown that the prolonged use of social media may be related to the signs and symptoms of depression as well as low [self-esteem](#), especially in children.

Anxiety

Teens often feel emotionally invested in their social media accounts. Not only do they feel pressure to respond quickly online, but they also feel pressure to have perfect photos and well-written posts, all of which can cause a great deal of anxiety. In fact, some studies have found that the larger a teen's social circle online the more anxiety they feel about keeping up with everything online.

It takes a lot of time and effort to keep up with the unspoken rules and culture of each social media platform. As a result, this puts additional pressure on teens, which can cause feelings of anxiety.

Additionally, if teens commit a faux pas online, this also can be an extreme source of anxiety. Many teens, especially girls, are prone to worry about what others might think of them and how they will respond when they see them next. Then factor in cyberbullying, [slut-shaming](#), and other mean online behaviors and you can see why social media is a very real source of anxiety for many teens.

Sleep Deprivation

Sometimes teens spend so many hours on social media that they begin to lose valuable sleep. Consequently, this sleep loss can lead to moodiness, a drop in grades, and overeating, as well as exacerbate existing problems like depression, anxiety, and ADD.

In fact, [one British study](#) published in the *Journal of Youth Studies* surveyed 900 teens between the ages of 12 and 15 about their social media use and its impact on sleep. What they found was that one-fifth of the teens said they "almost always" wake up during the night and log in to social media. The study also revealed that girls were significantly more likely than boys to wake up and check social media on their phones.

In addition to reporting feeling tired all the time, they also reported being less happy on average than teens whose sleep was not disturbed by social media. What's more, teens need more sleep than adults do, so logging into social media in the middle of the night can be detrimental to their physical health as well. For instance, aside from feeling tired and irritable, [lack of sleep](#) can lower the immune system and make it more likely for a teen to get sick.

Envy

[Jealousy and envy](#) – while normal emotions – can wreak havoc on teen brains if they dwell on what someone else has possessed or has experienced, that they themselves have not. And because people tend to post only the positive things that they experience, or make light of the bad with funny little anecdotes, it can appear to the reader that other people lead more exciting lives than they do.

Unfortunately, what teens often do not realize is that people tend to only post their "highlight reel" on social media and often keep the mundane or difficult experiences off the Internet. As a result, another person's life may look perfect online, but offline they have struggles just like anyone else.

Still, it is easy for a teen to play the comparison game and start thinking that everyone is happier or better off than she is. As a result, this can feed into depression, loneliness, anger and a variety of other issues.

What's more, envy, if not dealt with, often leads to bullying and mean behavior. In fact, many [girls](#) target others because they are jealous of the target's clothes, boyfriend, successes, or any number of other things.

Communication Issues

While social media is a great way to keep in touch with friends and family, it also is not the same as face-to-face communication. For instance, a teen cannot see a person's facial expressions or hear their tone of voice online. As a result, it is very easy for misunderstandings to occur, especially when people try to be funny or sarcastic online. Many teens spend so much time online checking statuses and likes that they forget to interact with the people right in front of them. For this reason, [friendships](#) and dating relationships can suffer when social media takes center stage in a person's life. As a result, teens risk having relationships that are not deep or authentic. Teens who place a priority on social media will often focus on the pictures they take that show how much fun they are having rather than actually focusing on having fun. The end result is that their friendships suffer.

A Word From Verywell

Because so much brain development takes place during the teen years, it is important that parents understand the impact that social media use can have on their kids. For this reason, it is important to establish [guidelines for social media use](#). It's also important for families to have regular discussions on how to use social media responsibly and safely. When families navigate the world of social media together, a teen's online world becomes much more manageable.

Information about Instagram

Is There a Minimum Age to Use Instagram?

Instagram complies with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act and requires users to be 13 or over. However, because it doesn't ask for proof of age, younger children can easily sign up for an account (with or without a parent's permission). If Instagram is notified of an underage account holder and can verify the user's age, it will delete the account.

What Personal Information Is on the Account?

The display name (which may or may not be the user's real name), profile picture, and bio are visible to the public (including those who don't follow, or subscribe, to the feed). It's important to insist that your teen keeps a faux username, rather than using her full name, as the display name. The profile picture should be appropriate for her age, and the bio should be innocuous. Behind the scenes, there's a "private information" section. Here, your teen could enter her phone number—but it's not required, so make sure that it's blank, just to be on the safe side.

Can I Restrict Who Sees My Child's Profile?

In two words—kind of. The whole point of Instagram is, to garner a large following. However, if you would prefer your teen restricts access to her photos and videos to a limited number of people, you can do that by setting the profile to private. If it remains public, that means everyone—from those who follow the profile to the general public—can see the photos. If it's private, that means the user has to approve anyone who has to follow you. If your teen wants a public account, but you want him to be private, create the account in steps. Start with a private account, and once your teen proves that he can play by the rules, allow the account to go public.

Does the Photo Share Where My Child Is Located?

It can if you allow it to. You can tag your photo to be at a certain location, but you don't have to. Decide whether you're willing to let your teen tag locations and communicate that decision. If you want to remove the decision, take your teen's phone, go into settings and turn off location settings for Instagram. At the same time, you might want to double-check what other apps are allowing your teen to post where they're located at any given time. Giving away her location might invite potential predators to come to find her. Of course, even if you shut off the location settings, the photo itself might make it obvious where your teen is. A picture of herself at the high school football game or a photo with an identifiable landmark in the background will also announce where she is.

How Do I Stop Certain People From Seeing My Child's Profile?

You can easily block other Instagram users; however, if your teen's profile is set to public, they'll still be able to see it without having an Instagram account—they simply won't be able to comment or direct message your child. To block a user, go to the profile of that person, select the menu button and then choose "Block User." This also stops the person from tagging your teen in photos.

Can I Get Rid of a Photo My Child Has Posted on Instagram?

You can always delete a post, even years after the fact. Remember, though, if your child shared it to Facebook or Twitter, deleting the photo on Instagram doesn't delete it on other social media platforms. Therefore, you'll have to visit each site individually to delete the photo. If someone has tagged your teen in a photo, and you don't want that to show up, click on your teen's name on the photo and delete the tag. Remember that just because it doesn't appear in your teen's account anymore, doesn't mean it's gone forever. Someone else may have saved it or shared it already.

How Can I Report a User Bullying or Harassing My Child?

If someone is posting cruel comments or otherwise harassing your teen on Instagram, and it clearly violates the company's Community Guidelines and Terms of Use, report it to Instagram. The platform offers a built-in reporting system, and it's completely anonymous. That means the abuser will not know that the report came from your teen's account. Your teen might be wary about reporting their peers, worrying about backlash. However, you should talk to your teen about internet safety often. Discuss the importance of using Instagram's blocking feature and privacy settings.

Is Peer Pressure a Problem on Instagram?

Since Instagram is made up of pictures, there can be pressure to look good. Some teens spend hours trying to capture the perfect selfie to share. And then, they sit back and watch what type of reaction they get from their photo. Many teens depend on likes and comments on social media to fuel their self-image. The more attention they attract, the better they feel. Of course, body image issues play out on lots of other social media platforms as well. But, Instagram has been particularly problematic. Hashtags like #thighgap, for example, becomes a bragging right among females who show off how thin their legs are. Placing such a large emphasis on appearance and comparing images to one another could lead to self-esteem problems and may fuel eating disorders.

Can Photos of My Child Appear on Instagram Even If She Doesn't Have an Account?

Even if you don't allow your child to have an Instagram account, that doesn't mean he's not on the site. Teens need to know that even if they don't partake in social media, they might still be building an online reputation that could be found by future hiring managers or college admissions officers. Nothing stops another user from uploading a photo of your teen and identifying him by his full name. Remember, at least if your teen has an account, there's a modicum of control over which photos identify the child.

What Do I Do If I Want to Forbid My Child From Having an Instagram Account?

You could do that, but you might not like how it plays out. Social media is a mainstay in a teen's life, no matter how much you don't want that to be true. If you have a super-obedient child, then go for it. If your teen is like most, then he might not follow your edict. Given that email accounts are free and the app is free, it's pretty easy for your teen to get on it without your knowledge. As the saying goes, better the devil you know, than the devil you don't.

Rules to Set for Using Instagram Appropriately

Use your best judgment based on your priorities and values. Here are some suggestions:

- Double-check the photos, including the background, for identifying information. A photo posted in your teen's room might have a banner exclaiming her high school behind her.
- Hashtags should not reveal personal information or a location, such as #MountainsideHighSchool, #HappinessInNewton or #GymnasticsInOsseo.
- All pictures must be taken while the teen is fully clothed; i.e. no bathing suit pictures. Even if she is fully clothed, no photos from above the head while wearing a v-neck shirt.
- No vulgarity or cruel remarks in captions or comments.
- Do not post photos of other people without their permission.

Even if it's the norm, social media is tricky to navigate, particularly when parents aren't used to this new world. However, as teens go through high school, college and enter the job market, they will be expected to know how to use these platforms. Therefore, it does them a disservice to forbid them to have an account. With proper parental monitoring and some common sense, a teen can successfully use Instagram without problems.

TIPS FOR SAFE SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR TEENS

Be your own person. Don't let others pressure you to be someone you aren't.

Be nice online. Or at least treat people the way you'd want to be treated. If someone's mean to you, try not to react, definitely don't retaliate, and talk to a trusted adult or a friend who can help. Use privacy tools to block the meanies.

Think about what you post. Sharing provocative photos or intimate details online, even in private emails, can cause you problems later on. Even people you consider friends can use this info against you, especially if they become ex-friends.

Passwords are private. Don't share your password even with friends.

Read between the "lines." It may be fun to check out new people for friendship or romance, but be aware that, while some people are nice, others act nice because they're trying to get something. Flattering or supportive messages may be more about manipulation than friendship or romance.

Don't talk about sex with strangers. Be cautious when communicating with people you don't know in person, especially if the conversation starts to be about sex or physical details. Don't lead them on – you don't want to be the target of a predator's grooming. If they persist, call your local police or contact CyberTipline.com.

Avoid in-person meetings. The only way someone can physically harm you is if you're both in the same location, so – to be 100% safe – don't meet them in person. If you really have to get together with someone you "met" online, don't go alone. Have the meeting in a public place, tell a parent or some other solid backup, and bring some friends along.

Don't measure your own value based on what others post. People typically post planned and happy photos and stories online and don't usually share their boring or sad moments or unflattering photos. Don't assume that others have better lives than you do, based on what they post.

Academic Support Available at Los Cerritos



- Homework help
 - Monday-Friday from 8:04-8:51 in room P3 with Mrs. Kay
- Homework club
 - Monday-Friday at lunch in room 12 with Mrs. Meir
- English help with your own teacher (make arrangements)
- Math study hall at lunch (grades 7 & 8)
 - Tuesdays in room P6 (Mr. Pyle)
 - Thursdays in room p5 (Mrs. Landseadel)

FREE Community Resources for Tutoring (found on Counseling page of Los Cerritos Website <http://www.conejousd.org/loscerritos/Parents/Counseling>)

Thousand Oaks Teen Center

FREE Math Tutoring Monday and Thursday 4:00-5:30

No Appointment Necessary

Thousand Oaks Library – Homework Help

(Need a library card to access on line services)

<https://www.tolibrary.org/teens/homework-help>

BrainFuse HelpNow! - Live online help from expert tutors from 1-10 p.m. Through the Library Website

PAID Tutoring Resources

Thousand Oaks Student Tutoring TOHS Students

<https://www.tostudenttutoring.com/> 805-870-5352

Students Grades/Marking Periods:

- Trimester 1 **official grades** were posted on 11/15/2019
- Trimester 2 **progress** will close 1/17/2020 and grades will be posted on the Q parent portal connection the following week:
<http://www.conejousd.org/Q-Student-Information-System-Login>
- Please check Q under assignments to see if your student has any missing/late work which is affecting their grade.
- Please connect with your students teachers regarding their progress. Teacher contacts can be found here: <https://www.conejousd.org/loscerritos/About-Us/Teachers>

LOS CERRITOS MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADING TIMELINE

Marking Period	End of Marking Period	Report Cards Available to View on Q	Days in Marking Period
Tri 1 Progress	9/27/2019	10/4/2019	27
Tri 1	11/15/2019	11/22/2019	58
Tri 2 Progress	1/17/2020	1/24/2020	29
Tri 2	3/6/2020	3/13/2020	61
Tri 3 Progress	4/24/2020	5/1/2020	28
Tri 3 Final	6/12/2020	6/19/2020	61

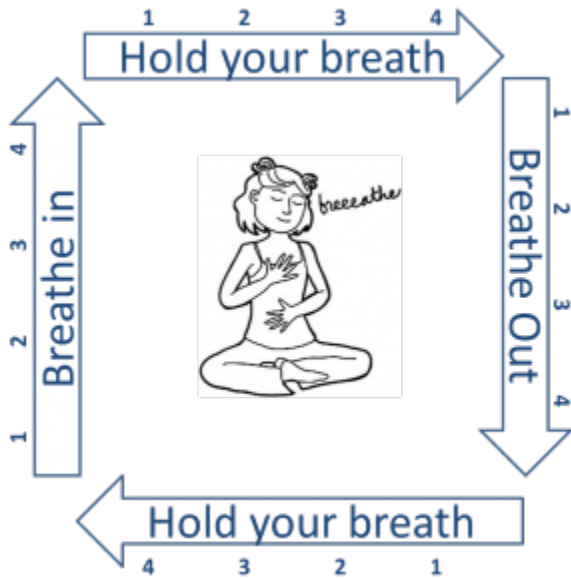
Help your student get involved:

- Lunch bunch is a great way for students to meet new friends and have a place to go during lunch. Check out the schedule:
 - Mondays room P5
 - Wednesdays room P12
 - Thursdays room 29
 - Fridays room 25
- Check out our clubs schedule online here:

List of Lunch Time Clubs below:

LUNCH TIME CLUBS		
CLUB NAME	MEETING DAY	ROOM #
Homework Club	Monday <i>thru</i> Friday	12
Art/Drawing Club	Monday	23
Yu-Gi-Oh Club	Monday	13
Builder's Club	Tuesday	40
Harry Potter Club	Tuesday	P-3
Book Club	Tuesday	P2
Beyblade Club	Wednesday	29
Chess Club	Wednesday	P-3
Dungeons & Dragons	Wednesday	10
Magic the Gathering	Wednesday	24
Robotics Club	Wednesday	27
Movie Club	Thursday	35
Wildlife Defenders	Thursday	7
Guitar Club	Friday	P-13
Origami Club	Friday	P-3
Toy Car/Fingerboard/ Board Games	Friday	25
WYLDLife Club	Friday	P-12
Geography Club	Friday	P-11

REMEMBER TO BREATHE



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