

# LYNX TRACKS

The Newsletter of the Lincolnville Central School

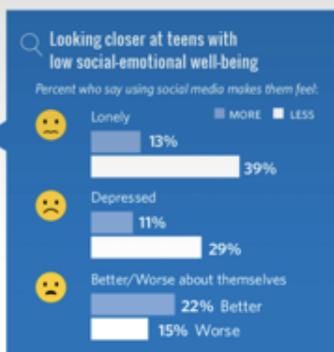
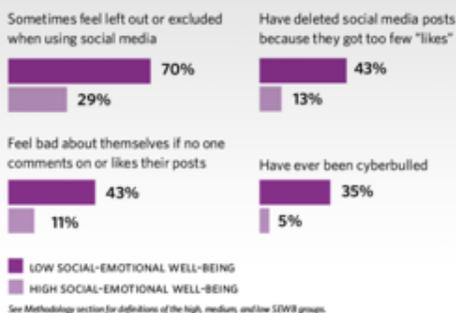
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Teens with low social-emotional well-being experience more of the negative effects of social media than kids with high social-emotional well-being.

Percent of social media users who say they:



## Social Media's Impact on Students' Mental Health Comes Into Focus –

BY KIRA BARRETT, Reprinted from **neaToday**

According to a recent report from the Pew Research Center, 95% of teens use a smartphone, and 45% say they are online almost constantly. About 70% of teens are on Snapchat and Instagram, while 85% are on Youtube.

One would think all this near constant "socializing" would make teens feel more connected than ever before. In her classroom, says teacher Cori McAbee, the opposite is true. "Social media has crippled my students

when it comes to interacting with one another in person. Their very ability to communicate is deteriorating," says McAbee, who teaches 11th grade English in Rutherford County, North Carolina.

The very definition of "social" media may be misleading, according to experts who are finding that the more time teens spend on social media, the lonelier and more anxious they are.

There's a correlation between smartphone usage and lower satisfaction with life, according to Jacob Barkley, professor of health sciences at Kent State University.

"Interaction on social media is not beneficial. It's electronic," explains Barkley, who has been studying smartphone use and students since 2013. "The higher the cellphone use, the more time spent on social

### Dates to Remember:

01/17 6-8 Winter Concert – 6:30 PM  
01/18 Afterschool Skiing  
01/18 LCS BB @ Searsport – Boys 1<sup>st</sup> @ 3:45 PM  
01/21 No School – Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
01/21 LCS BB @ Islesboro – Boys 1<sup>st</sup> @ 10:00 AM  
01/23 Lego Club 3:00-4:00 PM

*Note: School Committee Meetings are held on the first Monday of each month at 6:00 PM, with the exception of holidays when they are rescheduled for time that is mutually convenient for members and posted well in advance.*

media, and the higher the anxiety. Peer relationships actually get worse the more you use your phone."

Jean Twenge, a psychology professor at San Diego State University, reached similar conclusions in 2017. In her study, Twenge discovered that students who spend more time using smartphones and other electronic devices are less satisfied with their lives than students who frequently engage in face-to-face interaction.

"We found that teens who spent five or more hours a day online were 71 percent more likely than those who spent less than an hour a day to have at least one suicide risk factor (depression, thinking about suicide, making a suicide plan or attempting suicide). Overall, suicide risk factors rose significantly after two or more hours a day of time online," Twenge wrote in 2017.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade High School Course Registration

It is time for Rising 9<sup>th</sup> graders to be thinking about classes for their freshman year at Camden Hills Regional High School. To that end, there will be an 8<sup>th</sup> grade Course Registration Informational Meeting with the High School Guidance Director, Jeremy Marks, on **Tuesday, January 29th from 5:30-7:00** in the Walsh Common here at LCS. Before the meeting, at 5:30, a meal will be provided for all students and family members who attend the session. The informational session will begin promptly at 6:00. In preparation for the meeting, students must leave their laptops here at school the afternoon of January 29th. All eligible students will be able to bring their laptops home after the presentation.

In order to access Power School students must have a Power School Password. Students will be provided a Power School password by Ms. Richards before January 29th.

For families with younger siblings, free childcare will be available in the Art Room during the meeting. Please let the Ms. Richards know if you will be using the childcare option as soon as possible as the high school is bringing National Honor Society students to carry out this duty. If you have any questions call the Guidance Office at extension 110.

\*\*\*Note: In the event of inclement weather, the snow date is set for Wednesday, January 30th at the same time and location.\*\*\*\*\*

## Winter Band and Chorus Concert for Middle School Students Tonight

The 6-8 Winter Concert will take place this evening in Walsh Common. All middle school musicians are expected to attend their first concert of the year, dressed to impress. Band students need to arrive by 6:10; chorus-only students need to be seated in the audience by 6:25 for the 6:30 concert. We hope you can join us for an evening of festive, moving, and entertaining music!

If teens were to follow up high social media usage with lots of time spent socializing in person, the effects perhaps wouldn't be so adverse. But in most cases, they aren't. It turns out, liking a post, commenting "Cute," or keeping up with a "snapchat streak" isn't the same as catching up. It's not even close. Yet too many teens, according to these experts, are substituting real life interactions for Instagram posts, and paying the price. Because research into social media and education is still generally in its infancy, many educators are still trying to fully understand the effects of these technologies. Social media can be an effective teaching tool, but many educators are alarmed at the role it plays in heightening student anxiety and stress.

Social Media and Anxiety  
In 2018, the Centers for Disease Control issued some sobering statistics about student anxiety and depression. Teens are more lonely, anxious and depressed than ever. About a third of teens surveyed by the CDC said they'd felt persistent sadness or hopelessness. Social media, says John Richter, director of Public Policy at the Mental Health Association, believes social media is exacerbating this trend.

"Researchers are finding that when someone develops depression and withdraws from peers, they see other people on social media smiling and at parties with friends. It magnifies their sense of isolation," says Richter.

The Child Mind Institute's 2018 Children's Mental Health Report focuses on anxiety in teenagers, spotlighting the prevalent role of social media has in their lives. The report points out that existing research does conclude that social media can be constructive, "youth with a stronger emotional investment in social media are likely to have higher levels of anxiety."

And yet, students have trouble putting their phone down for too long, says Crystal Huset, counselor at Pardeeville High School in Wisconsin.

"It seems like many students struggle to detach from their electronic devices," says Huset. "Many students do see social media as an issue, but it is also the only thing that they

know."

Anne Braun, 5th/6th grade teacher at Woodland Elementary in Kansas, noticed the increase of mental health issues in her students. "I never had kids diagnosed with anxiety and depression 10 years ago," says Braun. "They compare themselves, and it brings on bad feelings."

Katrina Smith, a 5th grade teacher in North Carolina, agrees. "They base their love of themselves on how people respond to their pictures," says Smith.

The lack of real life communication, the comparison, and the bullying are too much for some students to bear, Smith adds.

Recently, she noticed a student acting out in her classroom. "She was especially agitated and disrupted the class. After working with her, I found that she had a lot more going on, and it had to do with Instagram. Her so-called friends had called her names the evening before."

Anne Braun, says students will talk about feeling left out when they see their friends

"How do we help kids who experience anxiety because of social media? The first step is teaching kids to recognize what anxiety actually is and feels like, and how to seek help," Richter said.

While many districts are taking significant steps in designing new evidence-based programs, helping students navigate social media is a challenge that many educators are taking on at the classroom level.

Larissa May, CEO of #HALFTHESTORY, a company dedicated to healthy social media use, believes that educators, first and foremost, should simply be aware of their student's experiences on social media.

"Every adult has experienced scrolling through Facebook for too long or comparing themselves on social media. Let your students know you understand these issues," she says.

Showing students other ways to use social media in the classroom can also help prepare them for healthy use in adult life, says teacher

Anne Braun.

"I had a student create a website after her friend got diagnosed with cancer, and the website allowed visitors to donate to the American Cancer Foundation," Braun recalls. Her students also respond favorably to positive feedback online via the classroom Twitter account. "They get comments from the online community, as well as parents and grandparents."

Larz suggests integrating a social media component into every project. "Social media is an extremely useful and powerful tool, and we can't

run away from that," she says.

Awareness of the issue is the first step for educators, parents and students alike, says Jacob Barkley of Kent State. "Encourage students to step back and examine their usage more critically," he advises. "Smartphones weren't a thing...now we're using them a lot. How is that affecting our lives?"

It's not about educators controlling their students' social media usage, adds Larz, it's about holding a conversation that many students want to have.

"It's important to present the impact of social media talk as facts. There is research showing the effect on our mental health, and it's something to be discussed in the classroom."

## Social media and anxiety in adolescents

- A study of more than 450 youth aged 11-17 found:
  - Ninety-seven percent of participants indicated that they used social media.
  - Thirty-five percent of participants were classed as poor sleepers.
  - Forty-seven percent of participants were classed as anxious.
  - Higher emotional investment in social media was strongly correlated with higher levels of anxiety.<sup>45</sup>

communicating on social media. "They have FOMO- fear of missing out. They don't have the tools to deal with these negative emotions."

Discussing Social Media in the Classroom

Ideally, every school district in the nation would be equipped with a comprehensive, systemic program to address students' mental health challenges. Despite renewed attention to the problem in recent years, it's clear schools have a long way to go.

In 2018, New York and Virginia became the first states to require mental health education as part of the public school curriculum. It's a start, says John Richter, because the curriculum will help teach kids how to deal with some of the pressures in their lives.

# SCREEN AGERS

## CO-PARENTING TECH TIME, WORKING THROUGH DIFFERENCES

*Delaney Ruston, MD January 15, 2019*

Let me start by sending my respect to all those single parents out there. There are millions of you, and I know you have unique challenges. I grew up with just my mom, so I have always been particularly attuned to the realities of single parents and their children.

Co-parenting, married or divorced, can be extremely challenging in these tech-heavy times.

I've come across several divorce lawyers who have included screen time in their parenting plan contracts. It's no surprise. Being the more lenient parent as a way to curry the favor of the child has been used for eons in divorced couples. Now, more often than not, the goodies are screen-related.

Most psychology frameworks emphasize the importance of parenting from a "united front". This is when parents come to a consensus behind closed doors and then present the consensus to the child. I wanted to provide a couple of communication tools that can help parents find a compromise when they do not see eye-to-eye. But first let me say that my husband and I have had, and continue to have, different views about screen time rules. In fact, it was one of these differences that was a major impetus for my starting to research screen time many years ago—and then to start shooting what would become Screenagers. My husband, like many other parents, had the mindset that our kids "need to learn to manage screen time for themselves." While this premise makes sense, the intense draw that screens have can often be too hard for youth to resist.

### How to improve co-parenting around screens

First and foremost, try to ground your conversations about screen time in data. Many of the past three years of TTTs include scientific studies. For example, if you search "sleep" on the TTT page, you will see my writings on what science tell us about the sleep needs of kids and teens.

Researchers continue to learn more about the adolescent brain and how it undergoes massive restructuring during those formative years. They have been learning more about

why getting at least 8 to 9 hours of sleep is essential to physical, mental and academic well being. Having a shared understanding of the science may mean that a compromise around what time electronics are shut off, and kept out of the bedroom, is achieved more easily. We have lots of conversations about sleep in my family so ensuring screens go off at a certain time has worked well. Most nights.

### How to ask for what you want from the other parent

So often we use "You" phrases such as "You let them use too many screens," "You don't understand how it's impacting them," "You are too lenient," or "You are too strict." A more effective approach to finding a compromise is by using the "DEAR MAN" method.

- **D**—Describe the situation, just the facts. For instance, "Timmy is having a hard time waking up in the morning because he is playing video games late into the night."
- **E**—Express how you are feeling and your understanding of it. Use I statements. For example, "I am worried and concerned about him being able to pay attention in class."
- **A**—Assert yourself by asking what you do or do not want. Be direct. You might say, "I want video games to be off by 9 pm each night."
- **R**—Reinforce how the change you are proposing can have benefits for everyone involved. "I think Timmy will do better in school, and we will have fewer fights in the house if the games are off at 9 pm. I think this can also help our relationship because get so angry at each other about this issue most nights."
- **M**—Stay mindful by staying on course and not bringing in other issues.
- **A**—Appear confident. Doing so makes it harder for the other person to dismiss your request.
- **N**—Negotiate with the goal of making both parties as satisfied as possible. For instance, if you want Timmy to turn the game off at 9 pm and your husband thinks it should be 10 pm, why not 9:30 pm?

When parents have disagreed for a long time about screen use, the conversation around the rules and consequences can escalate quickly into the red zone. I've found

what I call the "I Heard You Say" method to be extremely effective in helping get a positive result for all parties involved.

Ask the other parent to explain something that has been a sticking point around parenting. Such as: "Can you help me understand why you believe Timmy does not need a set time for games off during the week?"

Before they start, let them know that you want to repeat back to them what they are saying, so as to ensure you understand it correctly.

Then, a few sentences in, try to repeat back as accurately as you can what they have just said. It is actually much harder than it sounds.

When they seem to be done, ask is there anything else? The goal is for them to feel really heard. So, calmly invite any more points they want to add.

See from their perspective: Say something such as "I can see by what you are saying why you feel the way you do." Hopefully, this is true, that you can get a tiny bit into their shoes.

You are not necessarily agreeing with them (although you might). Saying that you understand their perspective does not mean you are agreeing with it. You just now better understand it. As humans, we truly crave being understood.

The final part takes a lot of willpower, but it's worth it. You would say something like, "Let me sit with this awhile and let's talk in a couple of hours. Then, I would love to say what I want for Timmy."

This break can be so powerful because you are really reinforcing to the other parent that you understand them better. If instead you go right into opposing views, you will undo some of the work you just did.

Parents, at times, will be in such conflict over tech time, that trying to present a united front will be impossible. Kids are perspective. It can be really crazy making for children and teens if parents try to pretend they are united and yet all sorts of clues point otherwise. When this is happening, time for more open conversations. Often professional counselors can be essential when things have become especially toxic.

For this Tech Talk Tuesday here are few conversation starters:

You can ask—What do you appreciate in the different things we bring to parenting around screen time?

Explain the "I Heard You Say" method and then practice it with them.

Explain what DEAR MAN is and have them fill in a scenario about something they want to change.

## Monthly Substance Use Prevention

### Update:

Maine Parents – Your Teen & Alcohol – 4 Ways to Reduce Risk

1. **Limit Access:** If you have alcohol in your home, keep track of it – know what and how much you have, and keep it where it is not accessible to teens. Alert police if you have information about where/how teens are getting alcohol in your community.
2. **Enforce Rules:** Enforce your rules consistently. Don't look the other way if your teen violates the rules. They need to know you're serious. Tell your teen what behavior you expect from them while they are out. Decide, before a rule is broken, what would be a fair and appropriate consequence; then be sure to communicate that with your teen.
3. **Check In Often:** Be sure your teen knows how to reach you before they leave the house. Ask if adults will be

present and if anyone will have alcohol. As them the address and phone number of the home they will be visiting and check in with other parents. Drop in where they say they are visiting once in a while.

4. **Be Up and Be Ready:** Wait up, or set the alarm for curfew time. When they arrive home, look for signs of use. Talk with your teen about their night. Prepare in advance for what you would do and say the FIRST time you discover that your teen has been drinking.

To learn more, go to [www.maineparents.net](http://www.maineparents.net), sponsored by the Maine Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services.

To find out how you can become involved locally, contact Wanda Gamage-Wyman, Substance Use Prevention Specialist, Knox County Community Health Coalition – 236-6313, Ext. 2; [wgamagewymankcchc@gmail.com](mailto:wgamagewymankcchc@gmail.com) Knox County Community Health Coalition provides substance use prevention services in Knox and Waldo Counties, and is a division of Penobscot Bay YMCA.

# TALENT SEARCH!

## RILEY NIGHTS



Riley School will be hosting its first monthly community talent show **RILEY NIGHTS** for kids of all ages and we're looking for performers!

We're looking for kids to share their talents & skills with the community. Do you know a young person that loves to sing, dance, act, play an instrument, do magic tricks....please contact us soon to be a part of Riley Nights! The first Riley Nights event will take place on Friday, February 22. This is a non-competitive monthly talent show open to kids, teens and young adults of the midcoast community.

Interested participants should submit a video to [sandeelee1@gmail.com](mailto:sandeelee1@gmail.com) or email to schedule a live audition. Works in progress are acceptable. Submission deadline is January 31 for February 22 event at 6:00pm in the Riley School Theater.



**DATES:**

Mondays, January 28 - March 11  
(No class February 18)

**TIME:**

3:15 - 4:15 p.m.

**LOCATION:**

Lincolnton Central School  
523 Hope Road, Lincolnton

**COST:**

\$30 for 6 sessions  
(Family discounts and scholarships  
available upon request)

**REGISTER BY JANUARY 24:**

[journeytohealth.coursetorm.com](http://journeytohealth.coursetorm.com)  
or call 921-3950

## Just for Kids Yoga

Traditionally, children are introduced to yoga through stories, songs and games. Our yoga instructors will continue this practice in a six-week class, where your children will move in and out of yoga poses while exploring stories that teach us about happiness, anger, love and much more. This class is appropriate for children ages 7 - 11.

## Journey to Health



Pen Bay Medical Center | Waldo County General Hospital