

33rd Annual Learning Symposium

Breakout Session:

Like and Subscribe: Belonging in the Age of Social Media

Presented by: Julia Avila, Stephanie Wofford, and Cynthia Diaz de Leon, Ph.D.,

from the Clarity Child Guidance Center



Discover the complexities of navigating social development as we explore the impact of social media on the sense of belonging among youngsters. In this presentation, we will discuss the developmental stages and needs of children and adolescents and the positive and negative impacts of social media use. We will provide information on how to help support youngsters as they navigate these pitfalls and harness the benefits of social media.

Presentation Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

- Review social development of childhood and adolescence.
- Discuss the Impact of social media on these developmental stages and needs.
- Provide information to help support youngsters as they navigate the pitfalls and harness the benefits of social media.

About Clarity:

Clarity Child Guidance Center is the only nonprofit mental health treatment center for kids ages 3 to 17 in South Texas. Our staff of children's mental health professionals is the largest in the region. When a child is in crisis, we work with families to get much-needed treatment regardless of their ability to pay.

The mission of Clarity Child Guidance Center is to support children and families in their pursuit of mental wellness.



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Like & Subscribe:

Belonging in the Age of Social Media

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01

Review social development of childhood and adolescence

02

Discuss the impact of social media on these developmental stages and needs

03

Provide information to help support youngsters as they navigate the pitfalls and harness the benefits of social media

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Social Development

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Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development



1. Infancy:

Trust versus Mistrust
Trust (or mistrust) that basic needs, such as nourishment and affection, will be met
(0-1 year)



2. Early Childhood:

Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt
Develop a sense of independence in many tasks
(1-3 years)



3. Play Age:

Initiative versus Guilt
Take initiative on some activities – may develop guilt when unsuccessful or boundaries overstepped
(3-6 years)

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Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development



4. School Age:

Industry versus Inferiority
Develop self-confidence in abilities when competent or sense of inferiority when not (7–11 years)



5. Adolescence:

Identity versus Identity Confusion
Experiment with and develop identity and roles (12–18 years)

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How might this look?

Age 3

- Notices other children & joins them in play
- Observes other children
- Learns how to cooperate

Age 5

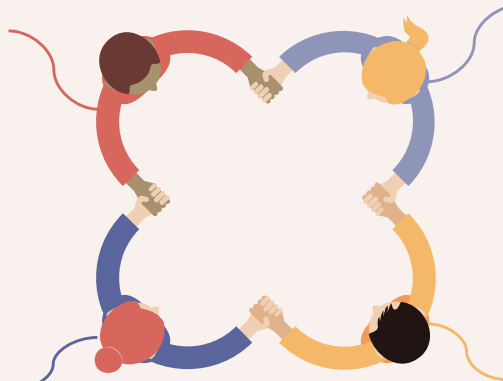
- Follows rules or taking turns
- Gains theory of mind
- Can be “bossy” (attempts to assert control)

Age 4

- Imaginary play
- Enjoys being with same-aged children
- Likes to help & contribute
- Will likely want to be with caregivers

Ages 6-8

- School and social interactions play an important role
- Deepening friendships
- Utilizes relationships to build self-confidence/efficacy



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How might this look?

Pre-Adolescence

- Striving for more independence
- May want to spend less time with parents/caregivers
- Continuing to invest in friendships to create a sense of identity & belonging



Adolescence

- Exploring various aspects of the teenager's identity
- Attempting to differentiate from parents (could be viewed as rebellion)

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What is Belonging?

- A fundamental emotional need to feel accepted by others and be part of a group
- Implies a desire to bond with others in stable, meaningful, and emotionally-supportive ways



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Why does Belonging matter?

**Related to
depression &
anxiety**

**Protects against
externalizing
behaviors**

**Increases
feelings of
adequacy & self-
worth**



**Decreases
loneliness**

**Increases school
satisfaction**

**Enhances ability
to develop
strong social
bonds**

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Importance of Belonging in Social Development

**Belonging has
a lasting
impact**



**Belonging
impacts
school
engagement**

**Belonging
mediates
social media
use**



**Belonging
impacts
identity
development**

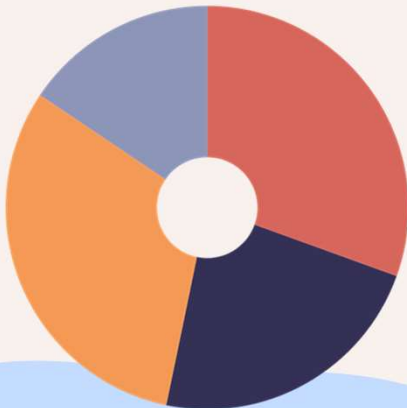
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02 Impacts of Social Media



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Social Media & Youth: Statistics



In 2021, 99% of children ages 3-17 were online

99%

33% of parents of 5-7 year olds said their child had an online profile

33%

60% of parents of 8-11 year olds said their child had an online profile

60%

Average daily screen time of teens 13-18 years old in 2021

8:39

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Negative Impacts of Social Media

- Use can lead to decline in family communication & participation in real world
- Increased rates of stress, depression, and loneliness
- Vulnerability to online ostracism
- Permanent record of actions and attitudes

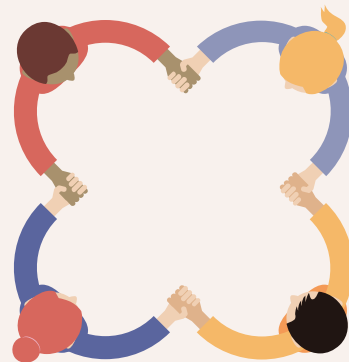


- Extreme use can interfere with sleep, physical activity, schoolwork, and in-person socialization
- Danger of one's algorithm
- Greater exposure to dangerous content

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Potential Benefits of Social Media

- Broadening friendship groups and exposure to social diversity
- May allow socially anxious adolescents to form stronger relationships with peers
- Practicing conversations and self-disclosure over social media can be a helpful step in feeling more comfortable in person
- Could decrease feelings of loneliness and enhance subjective well-being
- Can expose adolescents to material and concepts that can contribute positively to identity development



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03

How to Support Youth in their Social Media Use



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Strategies for Children & Adolescents



Ask for help



Create boundaries to balance online and offline activities



Develop protective strategies and healthy practices



Be cautious about what you share



Protect yourself and others



Refrain from taking part in online harassment or abuse

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Strategies for Caregivers and Adults



Create a family media plan



Create tech-free zones and encourage children to foster in-person friendships



Model responsible social media behavior



Teach kids about technology and empower them to be responsible online participants at the appropriate age



Report cyberbullying and online abuse & exploitation



Work with other parents to help establish shared norms and practices and to support programs and policies around healthy social media use

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Additional Recommendations



Youth should be encouraged to use functions that create opportunities for social support, online companionship, and emotional intimacy that promote healthy socialization



Social media use and permission/consenting should be tailored to youth' developmental capabilities



Adult monitoring is advised for early adolescents (10–14 years) with increasing autonomy with appropriate development



Exposure to content depicting illegal or psychologically maladaptive behavior, as well as “cyberhate” should be minimized



Social media use should be limited as to not interfere with sleep and physical activity

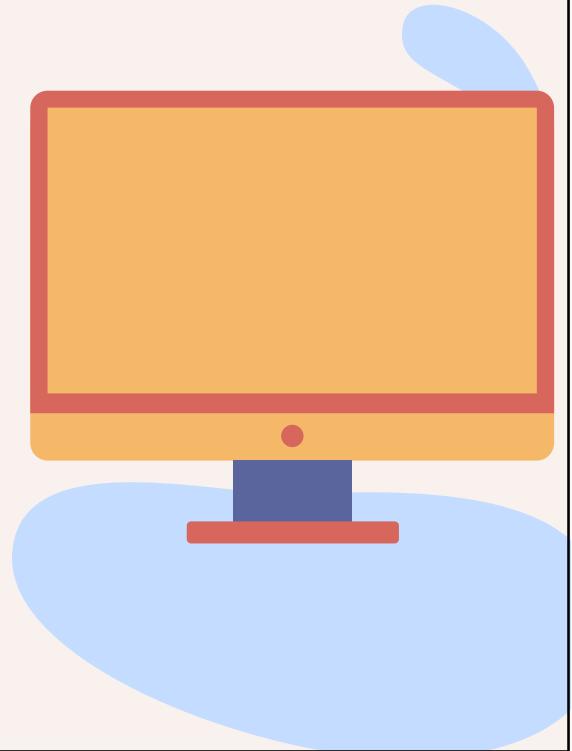


Adolescents should limit use of social media for social comparison, particularly around beauty- or appearance-related content

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Thanks! Questions?



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