

What's **SAP**pening

Brought to you by
CENTER FOR HUMANISTIC CHANGE
STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM LIAISONS

September 2026



Upcoming Events

- Suicide Prevention Month
- National Recovery Month
- FASD: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Month
- National Hug Your Hound Day 9/13 
- National Hispanic Heritage Month 9/15-10/15

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Preventing Cannabis Use Among Youth and Young Adult

www.justthinktwice.com DEA's website for teens provides information about various drugs and harmful effects of drug use.

www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com DEA's website for parents, other caregivers, and educators to help identify drug use, drug paraphernalia, and resources to help raise drug-free children.

www.campusdrugprevention.gov DEA's website for professionals working to prevent drug use and misuse among college students.

www.operationprevention.com/multi-drug-exploratory DEA's digital resources that provide educators with interactive drug education tools that are aligned to national health and science standards.

www.store.samhsa.gov DEA's website for professionals working to prevent drug use and misuse among college students. SAMHSA's evidence-based resource guide, Preventing Marijuana Use Among Youth, reviews the literature on prevention of marijuana use among youth, distills the research into recommendations for practice, and provides examples of the ways these recommendations can be implemented.

KNOW THE FACTS

Cannabis is addictive.

- Studies have estimated that 22-30% of those who use cannabis may have a cannabis use disorder.⁴
- The strongest predictor of cannabis use disorder is how often someone uses it, but other factors such as family history of drug use also play a role.⁴

Cannabis has short- and long-term effects on the brain.

- Many people use cannabis to get high. Cannabis can also cause altered time perception.⁴
- Frequent cannabis use has been linked to cognitive problems, such as learning, memory, and attention.⁴
- Research has also shown an increased risk of depression in people who use cannabis during adolescence.⁴
- Research has also linked cannabis use with suicidal thoughts and behaviors among teens.⁴



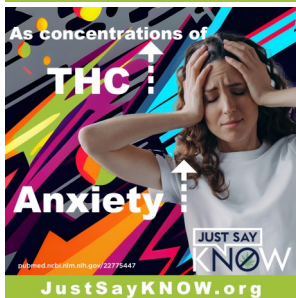
"But It's Legal Now, Right? No."



- Federal law states that marijuana in any form (e.g., smoked or edible) is not legal for medical or recreational use.
- Under the Controlled Substances Act, marijuana is classified as a Schedule I drug, meaning it has:
 - ✓ no currently accepted medical use in the U.S.,
 - ✓ a lack of accepted safety for use under medical supervision, and
 - ✓ a high potential for abuse.

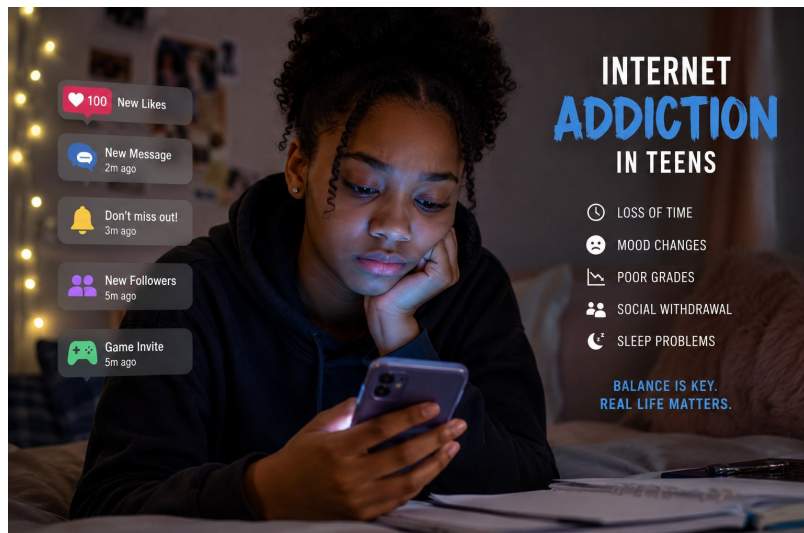
#1 Contributor to Future Opioid Use = Marijuana Use

Marijuana use before the age of 18 increases the risk of using and developing addiction to opioids.



Youth Marijuana Use = STRONG Association with Developing Psychotic Symptoms in Adulthood





Is Internet Addiction Real?

With kids spending more and more time on screens, parents worry that they are getting hooked

Many children and teenagers spend a concerning amount of time on social media, video games, and other activities on screens. Parents, and teenagers themselves describe their devices as “addictive.” Usually they’re using the word loosely, meaning that they spend more time online than they feel they probably should, and they have a hard time stopping. Internet addiction is not a clinical mental health diagnosis, but mental health professionals report seeing an increasing number of teenagers who do exhibit a classic addictive pattern, where internet use has upended their lives and led to depression and even suicidality.

Social media and games are designed to be very stimulating to kids’ brains. Technology negatively impacts kids if they spend so much time on screens that they skimp on eating, sleeping, doing their homework, or spending time with friends and families. Research suggests that heavy social media use can also be a risk factor for anxiety and depression in teenagers.

At the same time, it’s important to remember that a lot of what kids do online is age-appropriate and healthy. Using tech to talk to friends, listen to music, explore interests, and play games isn’t a problem in moderation. If your child still has enough time for all the other important activities in their life, then you probably don’t need to worry about their screen use.

If you do think that your child is spending too much time on activities like video games, the real issue might be an underlying mental health problem. Anxiety, depression, ADHD, and learning disorders can all lead kids to take refuge in online activities. Once their underlying issue is treated, they may feel more able to engage with offline friendships and activities.

“Happiness is not something ready-made. It comes from your own actions.”
- Dalai Lama

CHC SAP programming and activities are funded in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs with Lehigh and Northampton County Drug and Alcohol.

SAP Consortium

Contemporary Issues Impacting Youth: Trends, Challenges, and Community Responses

October 8, 2026 / Thursday / 9-11 am
Cedar Crest College

Join the Center for Humanistic Change (CHC) and our community partners for a panel discussion focused on contemporary issues impacting student health and well-being. Guided by Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) data, this diverse panel of community leaders will share their expertise and perspectives on current trends and discuss collaborative strategies to support a healthier future for our youth.

Register at:

<https://rb.gy/v6u9r5>



Social Media and Youth Mental Health

2026

Research findings indicate social media use contributes to negative mental health outcomes in children and adolescents, particularly high amounts of use, though not as a sole causal factor. Specific social media uses are also associated with positive mental health outcomes.

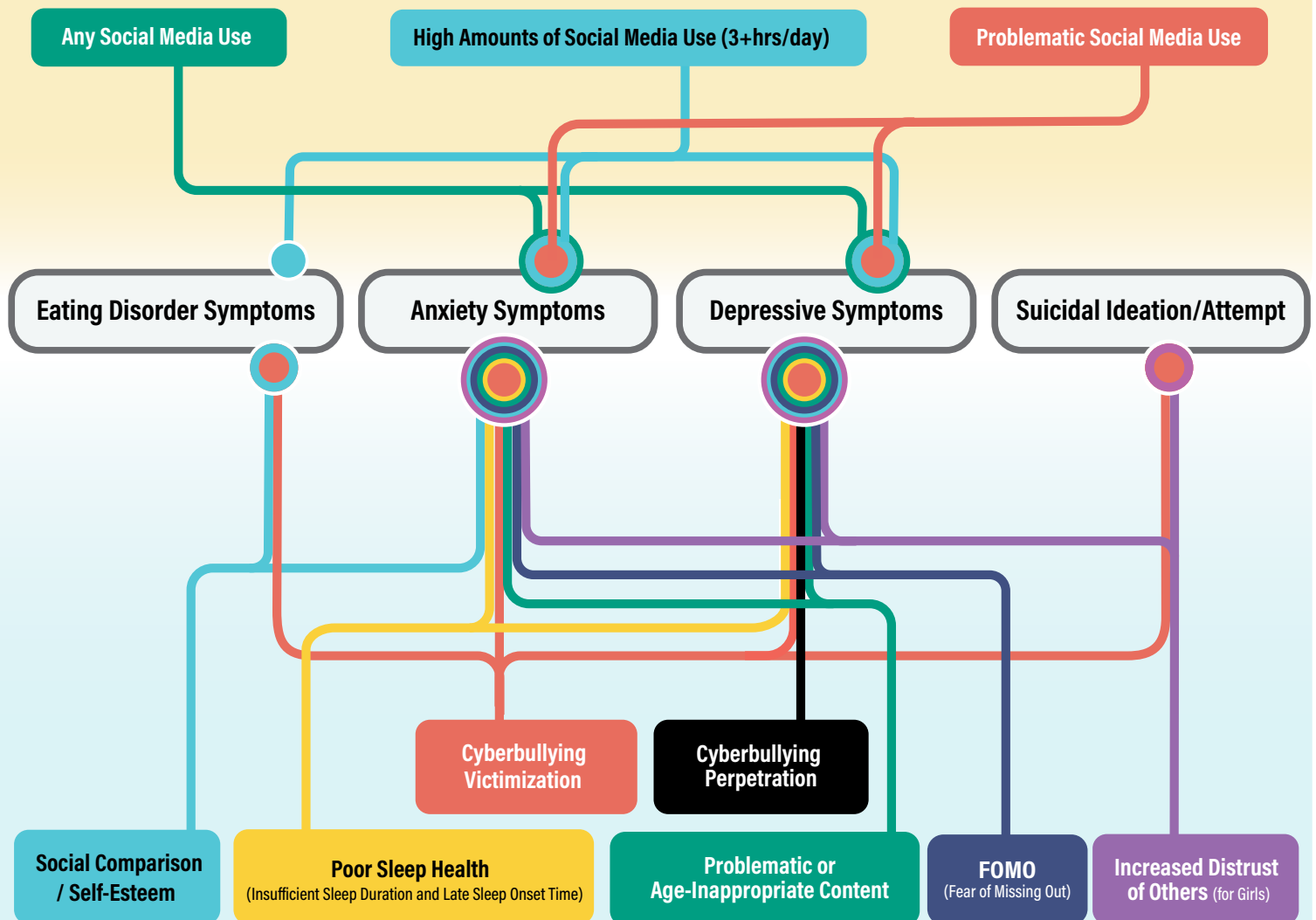
(Cunningham et al., 2021; Curle et al., 2026; Pew Research Center, 2025; Piteo & Ward, 2020)

Nearly two-thirds of 11-12 year olds report having social media accounts in 2025, despite most major platforms officially prohibiting users under age 13.

(Nagata et al., 2025b)

How is social media use associated with poor mental health?

Research has found consistent moderate associations between social media use and mental health symptoms. The strength of this association intensifies with higher amounts and more compulsive use of social media.





Who is most vulnerable to poor mental health effects of social media use?

Girls - Associations between social media use and depressive/anxiety symptom severity are stronger in girls than in boys and transgender/gender-diverse youth.

Early adolescents (ages 11-15) - Associations between social media and depression are stronger in early adolescence.

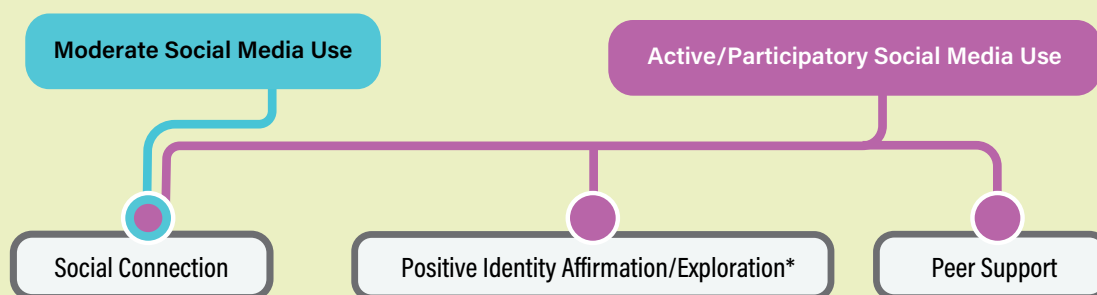
Racial minority youth - Experiencing direct or daily discrimination online increases the risk for poor mental health and suicidal ideation.

Transgender and sexual/gender minority youth - Higher odds of cyberbullying victimization increase the risk for related poor mental health.

(Baba et al., 2025; Kingsbury & Arim, 2023; Nagata et al., 2024; Pew Research Center, 2025; Polanco-Roman et al., 2024; Roberts et al., 2022; Tynes et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2025)



What type of social media use is associated with positive mental health?



* Particularly for racial minority and LGBTQ+ youth

(Avci, Baams, & Kretschmer, 2024; Hopelab & Common Sense Media, 2024; Nagata et al., 2025a; Pew Research Center, 2025)



What Do Teens Say?

Teen girls are more likely than boys to say social media harms their mental health (25% vs. 14%), confidence (20% vs. 10%), and sleep (50% vs. 40%).



From the “Facebook Files”

Leaked internal studies from Facebook showed:

- » 13.5% of U.K. teen girls said Instagram worsened suicidal thoughts.
- » 17% of teen girls said their eating disorder symptoms got worse after Instagram use.

“Worse for peers than me”

Teens seem to have more positive views of their own social media use than their peers:

- » Teens are more than twice as likely to say social media have a positive impact on themselves than on their peers (28% vs. 11%).
- » Nearly half of teens (48%) say social media platforms have a mostly negative effect on people their age.



Adolescents with internalizing conditions (inward-facing conditions including anxiety and depression) report more time on social media, more social comparison, and greater impact of social media feedback on mood, alongside lower happiness about number of online friends than adolescents without these conditions.

(Fassi et al., 2025; Pew Research Center, 2025; Wells et al., 2021)

