

Coping with COVID-19: How Young People Use Digital Media to Manage Their Mental Health

Depression among young people is on the rise.

38% of teens and young adults report symptoms of moderate to severe depression, compared to **25%** two years ago.

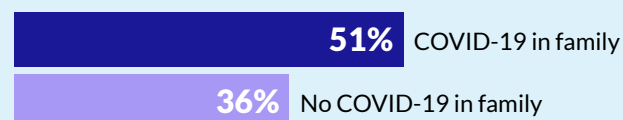
Depression is especially prominent among LGBTQ+ youth.

Percent of young people who report symptoms of moderate to severe depression:



Young people who have had COVID-19 infections in their family are more likely to be depressed.

Percent of young people who report symptoms of moderate to severe depression:



Black and Hispanic/Latinx teens and young adults are **twice as likely** to say they or a family member had COVID-19.

Among 14- to 22-year-old social media users:

53% say social media has been "very" important for staying connected to family and friends.

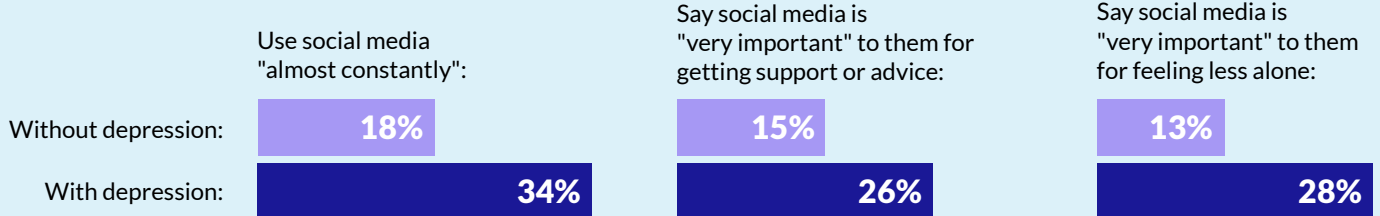
43% say social media makes them feel better when they're depressed, stressed, or anxious;

17% say it makes them feel worse.

Social media is a lifeline for young people to maintain social connections during the coronavirus pandemic.

Social media plays an outsized role for those with moderate to severe symptoms of depression.

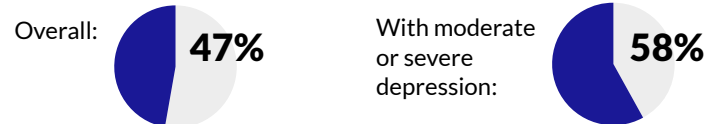
Percent of young people who ...



Young people make extensive use of digital health resources.

85% of young people have gone online to look for health information, and **40%** looked for people with similar health concerns.

Young people who have connected with a health provider online:



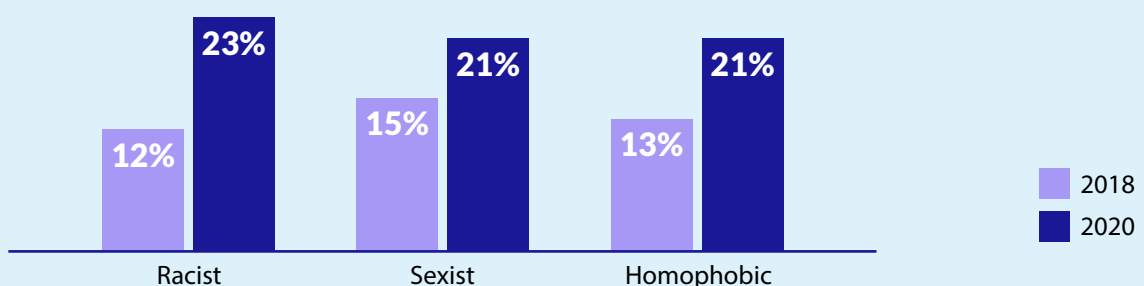
86% of those who connected with a health provider online have found it helpful.

And more are interested!

46% of those who have not connected with a health provider online are interested in doing so.

Exposure to hate speech on social media, which may affect mental health, is on the rise.

Among 14- to 17-year-old social media users, percent who say they "often" encounter each type of comments on social media:



Methodology: The report presents data from a nationally representative survey of more than 1,500 14- to 22-year-olds in the U.S., conducted in September–November 2020 by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago, on behalf of Common Sense, the California Health Care Foundation, and Hopelab. The report was written by Victoria Rideout of VJR Consulting, Susannah Fox of Internet Geologist LLC, and Alanna Peebles and Michael Robb of Common Sense. The margin of sampling error for the survey is +/- 3.64%.



For more information on how teens and young adults are using digital media to manage their mental health, read our full report: [commonsense.org/coping-with-covid19](https://www.commonsense.org/coping-with-covid19)

Suggested citation: Rideout, V., Fox, S., Peebles, A., & Robb, M. B. (2021). *Coping with COVID-19: How young people use digital media to manage their mental health*. Retrieved from Common Sense website: <https://www.commonsense.org/coping-with-covid19>

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