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:
- 65% LGBTQ+
- 31% Non-LGBTQ+

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:
- 51% COVID-19 in family
- 36% No COVID-19 in family

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

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

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

Percent of young people who...
- Use social media “almost constantly”:
  - Without depression: 18%
  - With depression: 34%
- Say social media is “very important” to them for getting support or advice:
  - Without depression: 15%
  - With depression: 26%
- Say social media is “very important” to them for feeling less alone:
  - Without depression: 13%
  - With depression: 28%

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.

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:
- Racist: 12% (2018) vs. 23% (2020)
- Sexist: 15% (2018) vs. 21% (2020)
- Homophobic: 13% (2018) vs. 21% (2020)

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%.


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

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