

The Dangers of Application Usage, the Internet, and Social Media

Series #1

Why should you educate yourself?

Most teens and many preteens use some form of social media and have a profile on at least one social networking site. Many visit these sites every day. There are plenty of good things about social media, but there are also a lot of risks and things that should be avoided. Youth don't always make good choices when they make a "post" on social media and this can lead to problems. To help them find the balance, it's important to talk with youth about how to use social media smart!



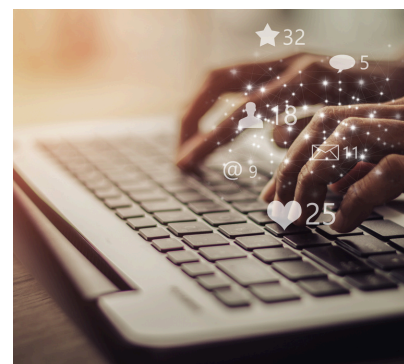
**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

It can be challenging to keep track of all of the applications because there are so many and they change often! It can also be hard to understand some of the language. We are hopeful that this series will help educate you about social media, the internet, and how to teach youth about the dangers of using them.

So how are social media, the internet, and applications different? Social media is the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. The internet is a worldwide system of networks and an application is a computer or software program that allows certain tasks to be done.

If your child has a smartphone, it may be tricky to decipher what each app does. As scary as it may sound, some programs look harmless and look like they may be geared toward youth, but they most definitely are not and should not be used by youth.

Research shows that technology has negative consequences with kids, including cyberbullying and sharing or viewing inappropriate content. Some apps are now even marketing to kids when they are meant more for adults! For example, there is an app called, "BIGO." This app has a baby dinosaur on it, but is used to talk with strangers via a live video. Others include "Wink" and "Yubo," which are similar to Tinder, a dating app.



Teens sometimes try and hide their imperfections. There's an app for that! It's called, "Facetune." This app allows users to alter their images that are taken with their phone. One app that is especially concerning for youth is called, "Hooked." This app has owl eyes and a beak with a black background. It looks innocent, however it allows users to read stories in a chat format. These stories pertain to sex, drugs, and violence.

Research shows that Instagram use worsens body image & mental health issues among young girls (The Verge, 2021).



Resource: Montana State University

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