

## Learning How to Navigate Social Media Productively and Effectively

Kalyn Anderson  
Healthcare Studies

### Introduction

#### Bay State Community Services

Over 80 programs with Strong leaders provide emotional and social support to promote the best for an individual's well-being. Bay State is dedicated to improving and providing the ability to improve individuals social functioning in a family and the community through education, recovery and correction groups. As a workplace, Bay State strives for employees who are looking to grow and excel in these programs and acquire different positions individually and as a team.

#### The CREW Program

- CREATE: A place to create laughs, smiles, friendships, bonds, coping skills, life skills, boundaries, and positivity.
- RESPECT: Respect yourself and others in order to grow and come together in times of need.
- EMPOWER: Help encourage others and be powerful in life with basic skills and activities to provide comfort and protection.
- WELLNESS: Take care of yourself and learn positive coping skills in order to be successful. Learn to create a safety net and space to thrive.

Overview: Offers Psycho-educational, recreational, and therapeutic groups to develop and practice skills needed to be successful at home and in the community.



### Related Literature

- Adolescents who are part of the LGBT community get bullied in school and online more often than ones who don't identify with them and have more reports of mental health diagnosis as well (Garaigordobil, 2020).
- Many studies indicate that social media and mental health are associated with symptoms of depression and anxiety (Mir, 2021).
- Another harmful aspect of social media is cyberbullying, which is bullying that occurs online. As many as 72% of teens say that they have been cyberbullied at some point (Mir, 2021).
- Some research has shown that LGBTs who have been victims of bullying and cyberbullying at school show depression and anxiety and risk of suicide (Garaigordobil, 2020).
- Although there are numerous benefits to social media use for adolescents, there are also several potential risks that may be detrimental to their mental health and well-being. It is crucial that mental health providers be familiar with these benefits and risks in order to more effectively educate and guide patients and families towards only safe, healthy and appropriate use of this media (Reid, 2014).

### Goals and Objectives

- Student participants will learn, educate themselves and others, listen closely and provide their full attention to these activities
- Activities will include fun and creative ways for the kids to express themselves while also being serious and getting a positive outcome
- Activities will have meaningful and sometimes tough questions or answers that will get the kids thinking and evaluating their own lives

### Responsibilities of the Internship Project

- Producing activities for the day and a question of the day to go over in community meeting that get the kids thinking about something other than social media
- Having the meaningful discussions and deep conversations to get to the root of problems instead of going to social media for it
- Group activity day where staff members create well thought out activities to help educate the kids on basic life skills
- Deciding at the end of the week what we needed to work on from our experiences in the beginning of the week

### Materials and Methods

- Group Discussion: Discussed how social media might affect your mental and emotional health by answering the following questions:
  1. Can social media have positive and negative effects?
  2. If you don't use social media, could it still affect your mental health?
  3. How can teens use social media in a way that doesn't cause unnecessary stress?
  4. Can you be or get addicted to social media use?
- After the group discussion we watched a TED talk entitled "Is social media hurting your mental health?" by Bailey Parnell
- Pre-Activity Survey: I asked the kids a few questions to assess their knowledge of how social media effects their mental and emotional health before and after the cell phone app activity,
  1. Do you think you personally spend too much time on social media?
  2. Would you be happy if social media disappeared?
  3. How do you feel after using social media most of the time?
  4. Does social media have any effect on your personal growth? If so, how?
- Project Activity: Using their amazing art skills, all **seven** children created their own app designs and names for a phone to describe things that resonate with them and encouraged happiness instead of stress in their lives. I showed them my examples which has apps called things like, Trips, Self Care, Cute baby animals, Affirmations, Good Food.
- Community Meetings: Every day I wrote on the board our activity for the day or what we will be doing as far as lunch and a question of the day. The group checked in with one another by stating how they were doing that day on a scale of 1-10.
- Other activities: On life skill days, we talked and created things such as, Vision boards, self care toolbox, working on forgiveness and expectations, Budgeting, and boundary building.



The pictures above represent the iPhone apps students created that they use daily in order to bring happiness when using social media. Some apps they included were Netflix, Health, Anime, Bible, and Video Games.

### Results

#### Group Discussion Answers:

1. "Social Media brings good things like state of emergencies, missing people, finding jobs, and making connections. Social Media brings bad things like cancel culture, cyberbullying, high suicide rates, negative self image and fraudulent activity".
2. "Social Media can still affect someone's mental health if they don't use it because it's very important in society so no matter what it will still be there. If someone doesn't use social media, they can still be affected by FOMO which is the fear of missing out".
3. "Teens can use social media in ways that don't cause any unnecessary stress by deleting it occasionally, use it to spread awareness, monitor your time and use it productively, and create support groups".
4. "Social Media can be very addictive because some people feel like its their only connection with others and the world. Some use it to distract themselves or "zone out" when they aren't doing anything".

#### Pre-Activity Survey Answers:

1. "We as teens use social media a lot but wouldn't say too much. It all depends on what we are using it for and how long. During quarantine was the most we have used it because there was nothing else to do".
2. "We would and wouldn't be happy if social media disappeared. We would be happy because there wouldn't be as much stress and cyberbullying, but we would miss all the important life updates. We all know social media won't disappear so its all about how disciplined you are while using it".
3. "Often times we feel drained and warn out after using social media. We are happy when it's used for something productive but most of the time it just feels like normal day to day life after using social media".
4. "Social media definitely affects our personal growth by fueling insecurities and solidify morals. It brings a lot of knowledge and affects our self image to be more conscious about ours and other sexualities as part of the LGBT community".

### Conclusions

The fun and intriguing part of this activity was using art which the children loved to do in order to express themselves.

Before we watched the TED talk, one of the kids sighed because they thought it was going to bash social media the whole time but after watching it, they expressed they liked it because it was about how to use it productively and how to manage stress over social media.

I personally got to watch each individual grow and express who they truly are while helping them build life skills and ways to cope with stressors in their lives. It was a very heartwarming experience overall and this was just a piece of their progress.