



# Helping your Teen with social skills and boundaries in virtual and face to face settings

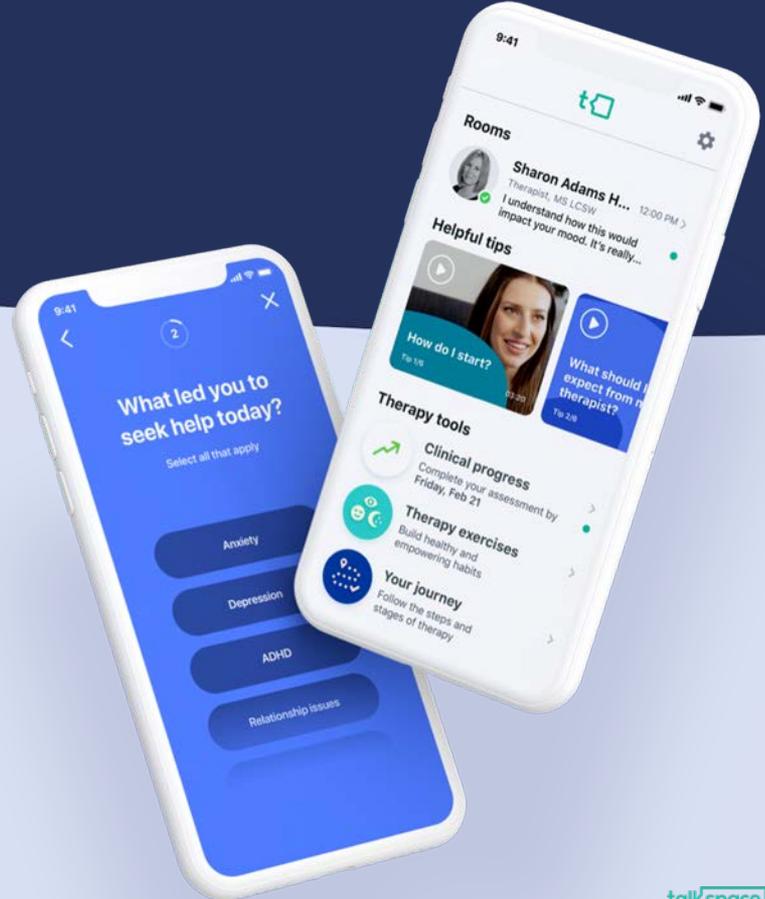
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# Today's Discussion:

1. The current landscape of teen social skills and social media use
2. Effective parenting tips to teach both healthy social media use and healthy social skills
3. The importance of doing personal work as a parent and taking care of yourself
4. Resources to consider



# Self-Reflection: Your Starting Point

What is your top concern when it comes to your teen's social media use/interactions?

What questions do you have in regards to helping your teen navigate social media?

What questions do you have in regards to helping your teen learn social skills?

What support do you need to have a better relationship with your teen?

# Teen Use of Social Media



*Up to 95% of young people aged 13-17 report using a social media platform. Nearly two thirds of teenagers report using social media every day and one third report using social media "almost constantly."*

-US Surgeon General's Advisory: 2023 Social Media and Youth Mental Health

# Pros and Cons of Social Media Use

## Pros:

- Connection with friends and family
- Interactions with diverse groups
- Exposure to campaigns, nonprofits, or charities
- Promotes creative expression
- Opportunities to meet teens with similar interests
- Education about current events
- Access to emotional support

## Cons:

- Cyberbullying
- Identity theft
- Exposure to offensive images and messages
- Opportunities for 'grooming' by strangers
- Body image issues
- Unrealistic portrayals of life
- Normalization of risk-taking behaviors

# General Considerations

1. Social media is recommended for teens 13 and above with the consideration that teens need to have the social and emotional skills to navigate the platforms
2. Spending more than 3 hours a day on social media doubles the risk of mental health problems for children and teens including experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety
3. Recent study shows teens spend on average 3.5 hours on social media per day
4. National Sleep Foundation recommends stopping screen use at least 30 minutes before bed

# Teen Emotional Health

- Globally, one in seven 10-19-year-olds experiences a mental disorder, accounting for 13% of the global burden of disease in this age group.
- Depression, anxiety and behavioral disorders are among the leading causes of illness and disability among adolescents.
- Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15-29 year-olds.
- The consequences of failing to address adolescent mental health conditions extend to adulthood, impairing both physical and mental health and limiting opportunities to lead fulfilling lives as adults.



# Your Role as a Parent



- Set appropriate limits and boundaries
- Know the apps your teen is using
- Teach how to use technology well
- Teach what to use technology for
- Help develop self-control and decision-making skills
- Help them learn how to emotionally regulate without screens

# Self-Reflection: Safety in Communication

What makes you feel safe to open up and share with other people?

When does your teen share with you the most?





# Creating Emotional Safety for your Teen

- Listen actively
- Validate their emotions
- Build trust
- Avoid criticism and judgment
- Create a non-threatening environment
- Be patient and understanding
- Set clear boundaries
- Encourage self-expression
- Be a positive role model
- Seek professional help if needed

# Inside the teenage brain

Adolescents are prone to high-risk behaviour

## Prefrontal cortex

Its functions include planning and reasoning: grows until 25 years

**Adults:** Fully developed

**Teens:** Immature, prone to high-risk behaviour

## Amygdala

Emotional core for passion, impulse, fear, aggression

**Adults:** Rely less on this, use prefrontal cortex more

**Teens:** More impulsive



## Parietal Lobe

Responsible for touch, sight, language: grows until early 20s

**Adults:** Fully developed

**Teens:** Do not process information effectively

## Ventral Striatum

Reward centre, not fully developed in teens

**Adults:** Fully developed

**Teens:** Are more excited by reward than consequence

## Hippocampus

Hub of memory and learning; grows in teens

**Adults:** Fully functional loses neurons with age

**Teens:** Tremendous learning curve

# Reflection: Your Teen's Digital Footprint

On average how many hours does your teen spend on their phone?

What apps does your teen have access to on their phone? How well do you know the apps that your teen is using?

What does your teen like about these apps? What does your teen do on these apps?



# Setting Teens up with Social Media

*With social media use comes responsibility,  
let's talk about what that looks like for you...*

*Think before you post*

*Be respectful of others*

*Your social media identity leaves a trail*

*Protect your privacy & the privacy of others*

*Don't interact with people you don't know*

*Pay attention to how social media makes you feel*

*Protect your brain*



# Teaching Healthy Social Media Habits

Create limits and boundaries with your teen

When can phones be used?

Where are phones stored at night?

What apps can your teen download and use?

Invite conversations around how to use social media

*What do you like about that app?*

*How are your friends different on social media than in person?*

*Do you think your mood is impacted by social media? How?*

*What do you think your friends will think if you post that?*

*How do you decide who to be friends with on social media?*



# Teaching Healthy Social Media Habits cont.

Help develop self-control and decision-making skills

*I'm wondering if this is a good decision, last time...*

*I've noticed that X isn't working. Let's brainstorm some options together.*

*I'm wondering if you should wait until you've calmed down before chatting with them*

Help them learn how to emotionally regulate without screens

Validate what they share *"That sounds hard" "That makes sense"*

Ask them to reflect on their needs *"What do you think will help right now?"*

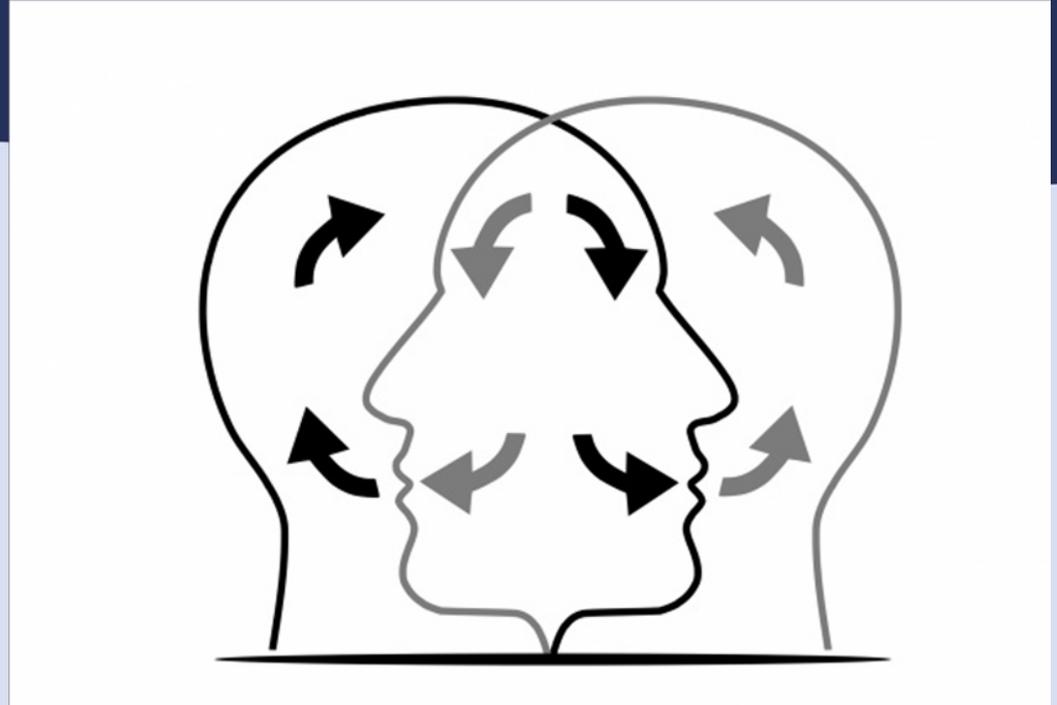
Offer information *"Some people find exercise helpful when they feel angry."*

# Self-Reflection: Social Skills

How healthy do your relationships feel?

What relationship skills do you want to develop in yourself?

What relationship skills do you want to develop in your teen?



# Teach Face to Face Social Skills

- Model healthy communication, healthy boundaries, self-reflection, and repair with your teen
- Foster and build your own adult relationships
- Ask open-ended questions to encourage problem-solving, empathy, and self-awareness
- Make observations out loud to your teen
- Ask them to participate in family decision-making and rule creation
- Let your teens disagree with you and have their own ideas
- Give them opportunities to practice: ordering food at restaurants, going on errands for you, eating dinner with different people

# Ask Open Ended Questions

*What was that like for you?*

*What do you think of that?*

*How does that land with you?*

*This seems to not be working.*

*What do you think we could do differently?*

*What's the hardest part about being a teen today?*

*What do you wish I did differently as your parent?*

*What music are you listening to?*

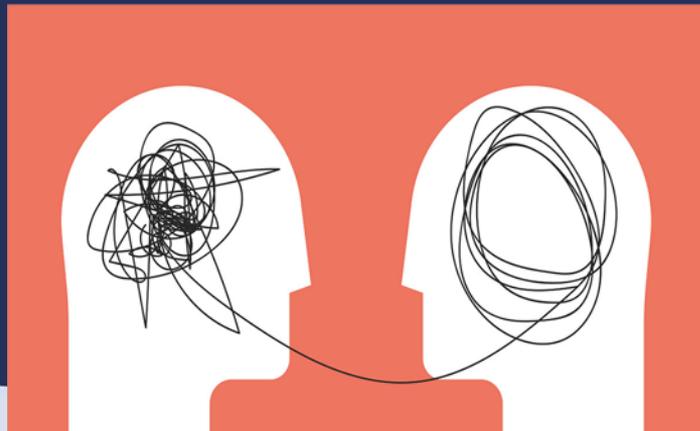
*What did you think of the part in that movie when...?*

*How did you feel about your math test?*

*What are you thinking about doing this weekend with friends?*



# Teach Empathy



Show empathy toward your teen

*That sounds really hard.*

*I would feel that way too.*

*I feel for you. This is tough.*

*I can imagine how challenging this is.*

Express empathy toward others

*I was thinking about Sean and feeling sad about what's happened.*

*I'm going to reach out to Ella and see how's she doing.*

Encourage empathy thinking

*What do you think that would be like?*

*If you were her, what would you do?*

# Encourage Self-Awareness

## Talk about your feelings, needs, and boundaries

*I've been feeling stressed lately. I think I need to start taking a walk again after work.  
I need to figure out a better way to manage my time. This is a busy season.*

## Make observations and express curiosity toward your teen

*I've noticed you've been staying up late this week. How's your body feeling?  
I'm wondering how math class has been going. I know you were feeling stressed.  
Have you figured out how to manage your time?*

## Direct your teen inward

*It sounds frustrating and I know you can handle it  
Listen to what you need and be kind to yourself. I'm here if you need me.*

# Self-Care for Parents

- Take time for yourself
- Practice living a healthy lifestyle
- Seek support
- Set healthy boundaries
- Practice self-compassion
- Maintain social connections; rely on adults for emotional needs
- Mindfulness and relaxation
- Pursue personal interests



# Key Takeaways



- Set ground rules for social media together with your teen
- Teach and empower rather than discipline and rule
- Model social relationships you would want your teen to replicate
- Make sure that you are practicing self-care throughout your day
- Seeking out support is a sign of strength and you don't have to be in crisis

# Exercise: Your Takeaways

What do you want to do differently with helping your teen navigate social media?

What social skill do you want to help your teen develop?

What open ended question can you ask your teen today?



# Resources

Family media plan:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/fmp/Pages/MediaPlan.aspx>

Tip Sheet for Parents: <https://www.apa.org/topics/social-media-internet/social-media-parent-tips>

Talkspace Blog:

<https://www.talkspace.com/blog/category/teens/>



# Questions?

