

Social media and adolescent mental health: Consensus report

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In an editorial, Sandro Galea and Gillian Buckley summarize the findings of a National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine consensus study report on social media and adolescent mental

health. The work is [published](#) in the journal *PNAS Nexus*.

Social media has to some extent been treated as a monolith, but the [report](#) finds that different types of engagements with different digital platforms may have very different effects on mental health. In some situations, [social media](#) may benefit [adolescent mental health](#), as when LGBTQ+ adolescents in isolating circumstances are able to form supportive connections. However, some harms, such as cyber-stalking and harassment, are real.

The [editorial](#) summarizes the report's recommendations, which include much more research, the formation of an ongoing technical working group at the International Organization for Standardization to develop industry-wide standards for social media platforms, and the immediate development and deployment of systems for reporting, follow up, and adjudication for cases of online harassment and abuse.

The report also calls for a US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration intervention program for children and adolescents who experience digital abuse, as well as the development of comprehensive digital media literacy curricula to teach safe, healthy, social media use at school.

According to Galea and Buckley, although there is currently no evidence that social media is the singular or even the leading cause of the current adolescent mental health crisis, there is good reason to research the issue thoroughly and take some immediate steps to ameliorate specific harms.

More information: Sandro Galea et al, Social media and adolescent mental health: A consensus report of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *PNAS Nexus* (2024). [DOI: 10.1093/pnasnexus/pgae037](https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgae037)

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