



The Parents' Guide to Social Media  
Workshop Guide  
Instructor: Halle Zimmerman

## **NOTE:**

This is an informational and interactive workshop that is designed to keep all those in attendance engaged. Every week, the content in this workshop, as well as on my website, will be re-evaluated and updated to ensure that all of the content (the research, articles, blogs, etc.) being shared is accurately reflecting the current state of social media use in adolescents. From start to finish, this workshop will run anywhere from an hour to an hour and a half in length.

## **Slide 1 | Title Slide**

### **Slide 2 | Introduction to the Instructor**

As a Digital Native and a Digital Media professional, I see immense value in social media. Whether social media is being used to learn something new, connect with others or express creativity, social media is a main avenue through which daily positive experiences are taking place. Because these experiences are happening every day behind a screen, they are beginning to shape various aspects of our life such as our behaviors and our health. This fact is especially important when it comes to our youth, whose formative years are also being shaped by daily social media use.

We can all be positively affected by social media use, but we can just as easily be affected negatively. Anxiety, depression, and sleep deprivation are only a few of the negative effects that daily social media use can cause. Knowing the importance of shaping the youth's social media behaviors, led me to focus my graduate school studies on this task, and to work in the field of social media, so that I would be able to stay in-the-know about the latest trends in the social media world. Through this pursuit, I have created 'The Parents' Guide to Social Media' to provide you with the facts surrounding social media use in adolescents and the latest research that will help inform the way you become involved with your kids' online experience.

From here on out, you can see me as your personal curator on all things social media, only sharing the latest and most credible information about social media use in teens in easily digestible ways, so that you can join this initiative without expending additional time or worry.

My goal is to provide you with the best information possible so that you will be empowered to start your own on-going social media conversation with your kids. By coming here today, we're all one step closer to a larger goal I know we all share – to develop the next generation into aware Digital Natives who lead their best and healthiest lives – mentally, physically, and emotionally – on and offline.

### **Slide 3 | Introduction to the Workshop**

If you are here, I am sure you've found yourself thinking about social media and wondering, "Where do I begin?" Don't worry, you're not alone. There are several reasons why you might not be completely in-the-know about your child's daily social media challenges, wins, behaviors and activities, but no matter what those reasons are, I am here to meet you where you are and tell you everything you need to know about your teen's social media use. This workshop breakdowns common social media lingo, the apps your kids are really on, and provides you with conversation starter tips – equipping you with the information you need to go home and start an on-going social media conversation with your kids today.

#### **This is where you'll begin:**

**1) Start by developing awareness.** Learn what apps kids are on and how to use them. Download those apps on your phone. Increasing awareness and knowledge about the platforms will decrease your fears and worries enough to guide you toward having objective social conversations with your kids.

**2) Next is creating opportunities for daily social media conversation, as well as emphasizing weekly digital detox.** Once you learn which apps they are using and what is happening on those apps, start initiating conversations about those apps with your kids. The goal is to learn on your own, so that you will have a better understanding of the apps before you start these conversations. Your kids' social media environment is just as important as any other environment in their lives (home, school, etc.), so it is important to show interest in and learn about what is happening in that space. If you approach your social media conversations from a place of caring and not of judgment, your kids will be more likely to let you in.

When you begin initiating an on-going social media conversation with your kids, make sure to also guide them toward weekly digital detoxes. Taking kids phones and devices away at night can be an easy way to do this. Your kids might not be as upset about this as you would think, because secretly they would welcome the break! At their age, they're not as skilled at managing their time, so by stepping in to help them regulate the time they are spending on social media they will have an excuse for their friends about the occasional social media absence and have set times that they can unplug.

**3) Third is helping kids figure out their why.** Ask your kids, "Why are you reaching for your phone?" "Why are you posting and taking a ton of pictures with your friends?" The idea is to help kids identify what is energizing for them and what is draining. They have a choice in how they spend their time on online – they can opt into an experience and opt out – and that is a really powerful concept for them to understand. Once they're given permission and understand they have choices, they can start making good ones that are in line with their personal values.

With the information you learn from today's workshop and

#### **Slide 4 | Activity 1**

Everyone will go around and introduce themselves. Please have everyone state why they came and what they hope to get out of this workshop.

#### **Slide 5 | Introduce Social Lingo**

Before we can fully jump in, I believe it's only right that we cover some of the social media lingo that will come up in today's workshop.

- **Social media:** Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.
- **Apps (applications):** An application, especially as downloaded by a user to a mobile device.
- **Social platform:** A social platform is a web-based technology that enables the development, deployment, and management of social media solutions and services. It provides the ability to create social media websites and services with complete social media network functionality.
- **Blog:** Blog is a word that was created from two words: "web log." Blogs are usually maintained by an individual or a business with regular entries of content on a specific topic, descriptions of events, or other resources such as graphics or video. "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.
- **Microblogs:** A social media site to which a user makes short, frequent posts.
- **Digital Natives:** A person born or brought up during the age of digital technology and therefore familiar with computers and the Internet from an early age.
- **Digital detox:** A period of time during which a person refrains from using electronic devices such as smartphones or computers, regarded as an opportunity to reduce stress or focus on social interaction in the physical world.

A full Social Media Dictionary will be available on the 'Resources' page of my website.

## **Slide 6 | State the Facts about Social Media Use in Teens**

Now that we know the lingo, I want to share statistics that will paint a picture of the current state of social media use in teens.

## **Slide 7 | Social Media Stats**

Facebook's foundation in 2004 makes today's teenagers the first generation to have grown up with social media. And while there are plenty of older social media users, no other generation has had social media and technology so deeply engrained into their everyday lives as those born after the turn of the century.

According to a report published by Common Sense Media, social media usage among teenagers has drastically increased between 2012 and 2018. A survey conducted in the United States in 2018 showed that 70 percent of teenagers (ages 13-17) check social media several times a day, up from just 34 percent in 2012.

## **Slide 8 | Social Media Stats Continued**

More astoundingly, however, 16 percent of today's teens admit to checking their social feeds nearly constantly and another 27 percent do so on an hourly basis.

Source: <https://www.statista.com/chart/15720/frequency-of-teenagers-social-media-use/>

## **Slide 9 | Social Media Stats Continued**

What else?

While teen social media users say they can feel overwhelmed by the drama on social media and pressure to construct only positive images of themselves, they simultaneously credit these online platforms with several positive outcomes – including strengthening friendships, exposing them to different viewpoints, and helping people their age support causes they care about.

Source: <https://www.pewinternet.org/2018/11/28/teens-social-media-habits-and-experiences/>

## **Slide 10 | Positive Effects of Social Media Use in Teens**

- 25% of teens say it makes them feel less lonely
- 16% of teens say it makes them feel less depressed
- 12% of teens say it makes them feel less anxious
- 20% of teens say it makes them feel more confident
- 18% of teens say it makes them feel better about themselves

Source: <https://smartsocial.com/social-media-statistics/>

## **Slide 11 | Positive Effects of Social Media Use in Teens Continued**

- 81% Feel more connected to their friends
- 69% Think it helps teens interact with a more diverse group of people
- 68% Feel as if they have people who will support them through tough times

Source: <https://www.pewinternet.org/2018/11/28/teens-social-media-habits-and-experiences/>

## **Slide 12 | Negative Effects of Social Media Use in Teens**

Although the positives exist, it is no secret that teens' online environment can be hostile and drama-filled – even if these incidents may fall short of more severe forms of cyberbullying.

- 45% Feel overwhelmed by all of the drama on social media
- 43% Feel pressure to only post content that makes them look good to others
- 37% Feel pressure to post content that will get a lot of likes and comments

Source: <https://www.pewinternet.org/2018/11/28/teens-social-media-habits-and-experiences/>

### **Slide 13 | Negative Effects of Social Media Use in Teens Continued**

In addition to the drama and pressure social media can bring, teens are being distracted from other important things in their life and their friends.

- 57% of all teens agree that using social media often distracts them when they should be doing homework
- 54% of teen social media users agree that it often distracts them when they should be paying attention to the people they're with
- 29% of teen smartphone owners say they've been woken up by their phones during the night by a call, text, or notification
- 42% of teens agree that social media has taken away from time they could spend with friends in person

Source: <https://smartsocial.com/social-media-statistics/>)

### **Slide 14 | Activity 2**

Now that we know the facts about social media use in teens, let's talk about social media apps.

### **Slide 15 | What Social Media Apps Do You Know?**

Social media apps allow you to connect with other people through certain web applications. The activity that we're going to do now is going to help us understand what apps teens are using and what you should know about those apps.

#### **Directions:**

- Ask participants if they have ever played the board game "Scattagories"
- Explain that the next activity will be "Social Media App Scattagories." Tell participants that when you say to begin, you want them to write down as many social media apps as they can in one minute. Give an example or two of social media apps, platform or services.
- Give participants one minute to complete the activity. You may want to have the participants work in pairs.
- When the minute is up, ask participants to count up the number of social apps on their list.
- Ask participants to highlight those social media apps that they believe are the most popular with teens.
- Then, ask a few participants (pairs) if they would share the apps they thought were most popular and what they believe are positive and negative uses of those apps.

### **Slide 16 | The Social Media Apps Your Kids Are Really On**

#### **Slide 17 | Texting Apps**

**GroupMe** is an app that doesn't charge fees or have limits for direct and group messages. Users also can send photos, videos, and calendar links.

#### **What parents need to know**

- It's for older teens. The embedded GIFs and emojis have some adult themes, such as drinking and sex.
- Teens are always connected. Without fees or limits, teens can share and text to their heart's content, which may mean they rarely put the phone down.

## Slide 18 | Texting Apps Continued

**Kik Messenger** is an app that lets kids text for free. It's fast and has no message limits, character limits, or fees if you only use the basic features. Because it's an app, the texts won't show up on your kid's phone's messaging service, and you're not charged for them (beyond standard data rates).

### What parents need to know

- Stranger danger is an issue. Kik allows communication with strangers who share their Kik usernames to find people to chat with. The app allegedly has been used in a few high-profile crimes, so you'll want to keep your eye on apps like this.
- It's loaded with covert marketing. Kik specializes in "promoted chats" – basically, conversations between brands and users. It also offers specially designed apps (accessible only through the main app), many of which offer products for sale.

## Slide 19 | Texting Apps Continued

**WhatsApp** lets users send text messages, audio messages, videos, and photos to one or many people with no message limits or fees.

### What parents need to know

- It's for users 16 years old and over. Lots of younger teens seem to be using the app, but this age minimum has been set by WhatsApp.
- It can be pushy. After you sign up, it automatically connects you to all the people in your address book who also are using WhatsApp. It also encourages you to add friends who haven't signed up yet.

## Slide 20 | Photo and Video-Sharing Apps and Sites

**Instagram** lets users snap, edit, and share photos and 15-second videos, either publicly or within a private network of followers. It unites the most popular features of social media sites: sharing, seeing, and commenting on photos. It also lets you apply fun filters and effects to your photos, making them look high-quality and artistic.

### What parents need to know

- Teens are on the lookout for "likes." Similar to the way they use Facebook, teens may measure the "success" of their photos – even their self-worth – by the number of likes or comments they receive. Posting a photo or video can be problematic if teens are posting to validate their popularity.
- Public photos are the default. Photos and videos shared on Instagram are public unless privacy settings are adjusted. Hashtags and location information can make photos even more visible to communities beyond a teen's followers if his or her account is public.
- Kids can send private messages. Instagram Direct is like texting with photos or videos and you can do it with up to 15 mutual friends. These pictures don't show up on their public feeds. Although there's nothing wrong with group chats, kids may be more likely to share inappropriate stuff with their inner circles.

## Slide 21 | Photo and Video-Sharing Apps and Sites Continued

**Tik Tok - Real Short Videos** is a performance- and video-sharing social network that mostly features teens lip-synching to famous songs but also includes some original songwriting and singing. Users can build up a following among friends or share posts publicly.

### What parents need to know

- Songs and videos contain lots of iffy content. Because the platform features popular music and a mix of teen and adult users, swearing and sexual content are commonplace.

- There are often creepy comments. Though lots of comments are kind, videos often have comments about the performer's body or other sexual references, and since kids under 13 and adults use the app, it's especially creepy.
- Gaining followers and fans feels important. Teens want a public profile to get exposure and approval, and many are highly motivated to get more followers and likes for their videos.

### **Slide 22 | Microblogging Apps and Sites**

**Tumblr** is like a cross between a blog and Twitter: It's a streaming scrapbook of text, photos, and/or video and audio clips. Users create and follow short blogs, or "tumblogs," that can be seen by anyone online (if they're made public). Many teens have tumblogs for personal use: sharing photos, videos, musings, and things they find funny with their friends.

#### **What parents need to know**

- Porn is easy to find. This online hangout is hip and creative but sometimes raunchy. Pornographic images and videos and depictions of violence, self-harm, drug use, and offensive language are easily searchable.
- Privacy can be guarded but only through an awkward workaround. The first profile a member creates is public and viewable by anyone on the Internet. Members who desire full privacy have to create a second profile, which they're able to password-protect.
- Posts are often copied and shared. Reblogging on Tumblr is similar to re-tweeting: A post is reblogged from one tumblog to another. Many teens like – and, in fact, want – their posts to be reblogged.

### **Slide 23 | Microblogging Apps and Sites Continued**

**Twitter** is a microblogging tool that allows users to post brief, 280-character messages – called "tweets" – and follow other users' activities. It's not only for adults; teens like using it to share tidbits and keep up with news and celebrities.

#### **What parents need to know**

- Public tweets are the norm for teens. Though you can choose to keep your tweets private, most teens report having public accounts. Talk to your kids about what they post and how a post can spread far and fast.
- Updates appear immediately. Even though you can remove tweets, your followers can still read what you wrote until it's gone. This can get kids in trouble if they say something in the heat of the moment.

### **Slide 24 | Live-Steaming and Video Apps**

**Houseparty** - Group Video Chat is a way for groups of teens to connect via live video. Two to eight people can be in a chat together at the same time. If someone who's not a direct friend joins a chat, teens get an alert in case they want to leave the chat. You can also "lock" a chat so no one else can join.

#### **What parents need to know**

- Users can take screenshots during a chat. Teens like to think that what happens in a chat stays in a chat, but that's not necessarily the case. It's easy for someone to take a screenshot while in a chat and share it with whomever they want.
- There's no moderator. Part of the fun of live video is that anything can happen, but that can also be a problem. Unlike static posts that developers may review, live video chats are spontaneous, so it's impossible to predict what kids will see, especially if they're in chats with people they don't know well.

## Slide 25 | Self-Destructing/Secret Apps

**Snapchat** is a messaging app that lets users share pictures and videos that will disappear after they have been viewed. Now, users have the opportunity to view content they've received a second time before it completely disappears from their chat. Most teens use the app to share goofy or embarrassing photos without the risk of them going public. However, there are lots of opportunities to use it in other ways.

### What parents need to know

- It's a myth that Snapchats go away forever. Data is data: Whenever an image is sent, it never truly goes away. (For example, the person on the receiving end can take a screenshot of the image before it disappears.) Snapchats can even be recovered. After a major hack in December 2013 and a settlement with the FTC, Snapchat has clarified its privacy policy, but teens should stay wary.
- It can make sexting seem OK. The seemingly risk-free messaging might encourage users to share pictures containing sexy images.
- There's a lot of iffy, clicky content. Snapchat's Discover feature offers a grab-bag of articles, videos, and quizzes from magazine publishers, TV networks, and online sources mostly about pop culture, celebrities, and relationships (a typical headline: "THIS is What Sex Does To Your Brain").

## Slide 26 | Chatting, Meeting, and Dating Apps and Sites

**MeetMe:** Chat and Meet New People. The name says it all. Although not marketed as a dating app, MeetMe does have a "Match" feature whereby users can "secretly admire" others, and its large user base means fast-paced communication and guaranteed attention.

### What parents need to know

- It's an open network. Users can chat with whomever is online, as well as search locally, opening the door to potential trouble.
- Lots of details are required. First and last name, age, and ZIP code are requested at registration, or you can log in using a Facebook account. The app also asks permission to use location services on your teens' mobile device, meaning they can find the closest matches wherever they go.

## Slide 27 | How to Start an On-Going Social Conversation with your Kids

When it comes to having any conversation it all comes down to intention and approach. The same can be said about the social conversations you have with your kids.

Kids are already aware that there is a disconnect between you and their online world, and the more you distance yourself from it the longer the distance will remain, or the wider the distance will become.

I want you to close any gap that exists and start to have organic social media conversations rooted in shared knowledge and understanding.

## Slide 28 | Tips for Starting an On-Going Social Conversation

1. **Intention:** Kids' social media environment should be recognized and attended to like any other environment in their life, such as their home or school environment. It is yet another place where conversations, learning and development is happening, so it is just as important as their other environments.
2. **Approach:** For those who don't know much about social media, finding the right questions can be difficult. In this case, there will be a disconnect right off the bat as soon as you make an attempt to ask what is going on in their social space. You'll wind up getting surface-level answers and not making progress in understanding what is going on in your child's online environment. So, it's better to be informed before starting a conversation and know what to ask your kids, so that when you do start the conversation they will know you have an understanding of what apps they're using and what they are using those apps for.



### Slide 29 | Tips for Starting an On-Going Social Conversation Continued

Some will approach a social conversation with their kids from a place of worry or distrust, so the conversation that will unfold might leave kids wanting to remain closed off. But, if you have foundational social media knowledge, ask the right questions and show attention to them, they will be more likely to open up and be vulnerable to some degree with you about their daily social routines and experiences.

Remember – Try to approach these conversations from a place of understanding and not of judgment, so that your kids will let you in. Once they know you're starting a conversation that will continue and become a normal part of the communications you have together, then they will become comfortable to discuss what is happening in their online environment day in and day out, and not just if something bad happens.

Don't forget – Have fun with it and let them show you new things on social media. Your showing interest in something they want to show you will be a good way to keep the social media conversation going. Use those moments to connect with them and even use them as teaching moments when appropriate.

### Slide 30 | Setting Social Media Limits

In various research studies focused on social media use in adolescents, researchers have found that there are several strategies used by parents to mediate their kid's social media use. Overall, the following strategies were identified: active, restrictive, and distant mediation – the latter being split up into deference and supervision.

**Active mediation:** Parents having instructive or evaluative conversations with their children in order to explain or discuss children's use of social media.

**Restrictive mediation:** Parents enforcing rules on time and content to limit and control children's media use.

**Distant mediation (deference):** Parents realize they might not have full control over their children's social media use so they don't enforce rules and are not as strict as they would like to be. Parents in this case keep their distance and express more trust in their children.

**Distant mediation (supervision):** Parents who trust their children's social media use, but also actively check up on them. Supervision in this case might be performed by checking online activities through reviewing their browser history and through viewing the profiles of siblings or even grandparents.

Some parents have also been known to monitor their kid's social media use by (1) making a social media account dedicated for this one purpose, (2) using a monitoring mobile app, or (3) communicating with their children through social media (e.g., photo comments, WhatsApp).

Source: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321245277\\_Mediating\\_social\\_media\\_use\\_Connecting\\_parents\\_mediation\\_strategies\\_and\\_social\\_media\\_literacy](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321245277_Mediating_social_media_use_Connecting_parents_mediation_strategies_and_social_media_literacy)

### Slide 31 | Setting Social Media Limits Continued

Think about these mediation strategies and figure out which one works best for you and your family.

### Slide 32 | We Must Hold Ourselves Accountable, Too

As a parent, it is important to stay in-the-know about what is going on in your kid's social media environment and to find a mediation strategy that works for you. We must hold our kids accountable for the rules and guidelines that we set, but we can't forget that we must also hold ourselves accountable when it comes to technology use.

We can't just play the blame game on our kids, because sometimes we are just as guilty of engaging in unhealthy behaviors when it comes to technology use. By limiting our time and being present with our families, our children will see the importance of time spent together, in the present with each other. If we can focus on our kids and on the present, this will communicate that we are not concerned about what is happening on social media or in any other digital space, and that what's important is right in front of them.

So, always be a good role model, even when it comes to technology use. Teach and model kindness and good manners in person and online. We all know that children are great mimics, so limiting your own media use will have an affect on them as well. We'll be more available to and connected with our children if we're interacting, hugging and playing with them rather than simply staring at a screen.

### **Slide 33 | Final Thoughts**

The bottom line? Tech is not our enemy. Social media and digital devices are an integral part of our world today, and the benefits of media and technology, if used moderately and appropriately, can be great. But, research has shown that face-to-face time with family, friends, and teachers plays a pivotal and even more important role in promoting children's learning and healthy development. So, keep face-to-face interactions with your kids a priority, and use those face-to-face moments to discuss social media with your kids.

With the information you've gained, you'll be able to go home and more effectively shape your children's social media use. At the end of the day, it's about communicating the importance of healthy online behaviors by guiding their social media use so that they can lead their happiest and healthiest lives – on and offline.

### **Slide 34 | Q&A**

Any additional questions that weren't answered can be taken now.

### **Slide 35 | Learn More**

Visit my website to keep up with the latest research and news in the world of teen social media use, make plans to visit me in person for one of my social media workshops, listen to my podcast "Decoding the Digital Space" and more!

[www.hallehzimmerman.com](http://www.hallehzimmerman.com)