



# Educator Guide: Internal vs. External Influences Video

## **Recommended for Grades:**

6<sup>th</sup>

## **Time:**

4 minutes

## **National Health Education Standards:**

This activity aligns with the following National Health Education Standards:

- Standard 1: Use functional health information to support health and well-being of self and others.
- Standard 2: Analyze influences that affect health and well-being of self and others.
- Standard 7: Demonstrate practices and behaviors to support health and well-being of self and others.

For more information about the National Health Education Standards, visit the SHAPE America website: [shapeamerica.org](http://shapeamerica.org).

## **Learning Objectives:**

After watching this video students will be able to:

1. Describe how social media can negatively impact mental and emotional health.

## **Video Description:**

Students will learn about the difference between internal and external influences from this video. When talking about external influences, the focus will be on social media because of the large effect it can have on student's lives during middle and high school.



## Pre and Post-Test Questions:

Use the following questions with your students in any way that you see fit (on paper, using a survey tool, etc.) You may choose to combine questions from various lessons and activities that your students participate in. Correct answer choices are bolded.

1. Social media can negatively impact mental and emotional health because teens often compare themselves and their lives to what they see online.
  - a. **True**
  - b. False
2. Spending hours on social media each day is good for your mental health.
  - a. True
  - b. **False**

## Vocabulary:

Use the following list of vocabulary as a reference for yourself or your students as you complete the Internal vs. External Influences Video. You may choose to use this list in any way that fits your needs.

- External influence – an influence that comes from people, places and things outside of yourself
- Influence – anything that has an effect on your feelings, actions, behaviors and beliefs
- Internal influence – an influence that comes from within you, such as your values and attitudes
- Self-esteem – confidence in your own self-worth or abilities
- Social media – technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts and information through virtual networks and communities
- Stress – the body's response to pressures from a situation or life event

# Supplemental Activity: Social Media Debate

## **Objectives:**

After completing this activity students will be able to:

- Describe how social media can negatively impact mental and emotional health.
- Describe how social media can positively impact mental and emotional health.

## **Materials Needed:**

- Paper
- Pens or pencils for brainstorming

## **Time Required:**

45 minutes

## **Instructions:**

Divide students into groups of four. Within each group, assign two students to research and present on how social media can negatively impact mental and emotional health. Assign the other two students to research and present on how social media can positively impact mental and emotional health.

Students can begin by reviewing the Internal vs. External Influences Video and the Cyberbullying Video from the Children's Wisconsin E-Learning Center. They can continue their research both online and by talking with their peers, family members and teachers.

Once they have researched their assigned side of the argument they should present their findings within their group. After all groups have presented, bring the class together as a whole for a discussion. Here are some questions you can ask:

- What are some ways that social media negatively impacts mental and emotional health?
- What are some ways that social media positively impacts mental and emotional health?
- Overall, do you think social media has more benefits or drawbacks for teens?
- What are some ways we can positively use social media to improve our mental and emotional health?



# Handouts

Included on the following pages are additional resources that you and your students' families may find useful.



# Anxiety Disorders in Children

## What Are Anxiety Disorders?

Children with anxiety disorders have too much fear and worry that lasts a long time. Children with anxiety often have problems at school or home because of it.

A small amount of anxiety is normal in childhood. At different ages, some fears are common like fear of being away from parents and fear of the dark. Children can also have anxiety when they are in new or stressful situations.

Children can have so much anxiety it causes problems.

Some children:

- Have aches and pains, like headaches or stomachaches
- Feel restless, tired or tense
- Have trouble focusing or sleeping
- Can also have tantrums or meltdowns because of anxiety

## What Causes Anxiety Disorders?

There are many reasons why a child may have anxiety. It can run in families and start at birth. It can also start after exposure to stressful events and problems meeting developmental milestones.

## What Are the Symptoms of Anxiety Disorders?

Children with anxiety may:

- Be very upset when caregivers leave them
- Be very shy and quiet in new situations and with people not in their family
- Stay away from places or activities that make them feel nervous
- Worry a lot about many things, and not be able to control the worry
- Talk about or ask questions about the things they worry about
- Not talk in stressful places, but talk easily at home
- Feel very scared of certain things like animals, heights, being in an airplane or seeing blood

## How Are Anxiety Disorders Treated?

Anxiety will not get better without help. Treatment for mild anxiety starts with psychotherapy. In psychotherapy a health care provider helps your child by understanding how they think and feel about things.

Children will learn to:

- Replace their anxious thoughts with helpful ones
- Control their anxious feelings with coping skills

Your child will need to practice what they learn outside of sessions. This is an important part of therapy. Parents are often part of therapy sessions so they can help their child practice the skills. Psychotherapy is usually done by psychologists, mental health counselors and clinical social workers.

- Medicine can help decrease feelings of anxiety. Medicines may be prescribed to help your child's anxiety.
- For moderate to severe anxiety, treatment that uses psychotherapy and medicine together may be most helpful.

## How Can I Help My Child's Anxiety?

- Be with your child and support them during stressful times. If your child gets anxious remain calm. Have them take deep and slow breaths. They can pretend they are blowing up a balloon. Do not let your child pass up things that raise their anxiety.
- Ask your child to talk about their worries. You can tell them what you saw that made you think they were anxious. For instance, if their body shakes when they are anxious, this is called a non-verbal cue. Do not tell your child not to worry.
- Have a daily routine or use a schedule so your child knows what to expect.
- Praise your child for facing fears and being brave in stressful situations.
- Talk with your child's school to let teachers know how they can help your child practice using their coping skills. If anxiety causes problems for your child at school a special plan called a 504 Plan or IEP may be needed.

# Recognizing Depression in Children

## What Is Depression?

Depression is a mood disorder that affects the way you think and feel. The most common symptom is a feeling of deep sadness. People who are depressed may also:

- Feel hopeless
- Feel that life isn't worth living
- Have thoughts of suicide or death

## Depression in Children

Children as young as age 6 may feel depressed. But they can't always tell you how they feel. Instead, your child may:

- Eat more or less than normal
- Sleep more or less than usual
- Seem unable to have fun
- Think or speak about suicide or death
- Seem fearful or anxious
- Act in an aggressive way
- Use alcohol or other drugs
- Complain of stomachaches, headaches or other pains that can't be explained
- Have problems at school or home

## What Can You Do?

Children with depression can be helped with treatment. Here are some ways you can help:

- Talk with your child's healthcare provider about medicine and psychotherapy. Both can help.
- Look for mental health resources at your child's school, local mental health center, social service agency or hospital.
- Let your child know that they will not feel this way forever.
- Offer your love and support.
- If your child talks about death or suicide, seek help right away.

# Mental Health Resources for Families and Educators

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, call 988 or [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)

Anxiety and Depression Association of America, [adaa.org](https://adaa.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/](https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/)

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, [chadd.org](https://chadd.org)

Children's Wisconsin, [childrenswi.org](https://childrenswi.org)

Children's Wisconsin Shine Through, <https://shinethrough.childrenswi.org/parents>

The Institute for Child and Family Well-Being,

<https://uwm.edu/icfw/tools-and-resources-3-2/>

KidsHealth, [kidshealth.org](https://kidshealth.org)

Mental Health America, [mentalhealthamerica.net](https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net)

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), [nami.org](https://nami.org)

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), [nimh.nih.gov](https://www.nimh.nih.gov)

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (Student Services/Prevention and Wellness), [dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health](https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health)



# Transcript

Braylon: Hey, it's Braylon and I'm here with Danielle. We're gonna look at some internal and external influences on your mental health. Internal influences are those that come from within you. Ones that can affect your mental health include your values, attitudes, self-esteem and confidence. People with healthy self-esteem and confidence are able to see the good in themselves and are generally happy with who they are. They have the courage to try new things and make new friends.

Danielle: Having unhealthy self-esteem, or low confidence in yourself, tends to have the opposite effect on your mental health. People with unhealthy self-esteem are generally less happy with who they are and less likely to try new things and make new friends.

Braylon: External influences come from people, places and things outside of yourself. Those that can affect your mental health include your home environment, family, friends, social media, technology, laws and life events. We'll take a closer look at a few of these. Let's start with influences at home. Some things at home that can negatively affect mental health are abuse, divorce, the loss of a parent, substance abuse, hunger concerns, poverty and anything else that can cause high levels of stress.

Danielle: On the other hand, having a stable, supportive home environment can improve mental health. Having someone at home that you feel comfortable talking to about your mental health is really important. But, if there isn't someone at home that you can talk to, be sure to find someone outside of your home that you can get support from.

Braylon: Your friends can have a big influence on your mental health too. If you have supportive friends that have similar values, they can be there for you in good times and bad. However, if your friends are more concerned with drama than being there for each other, they can have a negative effect on your mental health. It's important for you to choose your friends wisely.

Danielle: Technology and social media allow you to be in constant contact with your friends. It can help you connect, pursue things that interest you and share your thoughts and ideas.

Braylon: Keep in mind there can also be some negatives to social media. Many teens end up comparing themselves to those who they see online, which can lead to low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy or insecurity. But people typically only post happy photos and stories online and don't usually post their boring or sad moments, or unflattering photos. Remember, you're not necessarily seeing the whole picture. Try not to measure your own life based on what others post.



Danielle: It's also important to think about what you're posting about yourself and others because it can negatively affect your mental health. Everything you post online should be considered permanent. Even though you can delete a post, picture or comment, you can never completely erase something that you posted on the internet. It's all recorded somewhere. For example, even if you remove a post from social media, it's never really gone and people can have screenshots of the post too.

Braylon: Sometimes teens will spend hours on social media every day, constantly checking their account. This isn't good for your mental and emotional health, especially if you're focusing more on social media than your real-life relationships. It can lead to anxiety and depression.

Danielle: So remember, there are positives to social media, but there should always be a balance between the amount of time you spend on it and the amount of time you spend with your friends and family.

Braylon: That sounds like great advice. I'm headed to meet some friends right now. See you later!



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