Self-Harm & Social Media Use: What’s the Connection?

Do you know a young person who is or might be engaging in self-harming behaviour? Learn more about the potential harms and benefits that exist when these individuals use social media.

Young people engaged in self-harming behaviour who don’t look for help from health services might find an alternative source of support in their community member. This acceptance may help them deal with the offline stigma associated with self-harm behaviour.

Using social media to view and discuss deliberate self-harm is associated with both harms and benefits.

Using social media can lead to harmful exchanges such as:
1. Triggering self-harm
2. Depending on downplaying its risks
3. Showing live images and acts of self-harm
4. Discussing what triggers self-harm behaviour or suicidal ideation
5. Teaching others how to conceal self-harm.

Help Youth Identify Positive Interactions on Social Media Platforms

- Receiving suggestions for formal treatment
- Looking for professional sources of help
- Finding encouragement
- Getting advice on how to stop self-harming

For young people engaging in self-harm, helpful interactions on social media platforms can include:

Emphasize the Importance of Safe Internet Use

What to Watch For

Warning signs of self-harm can include:

- Relationship problems
- Unexplained scars
- Wearing long pants and sleeves all the time, even when it’s warm out
- Low self-esteem
- Problems with handling emotions
- Unexplained frequent injuries like cuts or burns

And if you think someone you know is self-harming

REACH OUT. LET THEM KNOW YOU CARE.

APRIL 27: IT CAN BE HARD TO TALK ABOUT. JUST LET THEM KNOW THE FACTS. THEY MIGHT NOT WANT TO TALK. AND TRY NOT TO MAKE THEM FEEL BAD TO TALK.

LOOK FOR RESOURCES AND PASS THEM ON. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. EMBRACE YOURSELF. SELF-HARM CAN BE DIFFICULT. OFFER TO GO WITH YOUR FRIEND TO TALK TO SOMEONE THEY CAN HELP THEM. LIKE A COUNSELOR, TRAINER, OR COACH.

Looking for More Information?

Check out these resources to learn more about self-harm and staying safe online

Kids Help Phone
@KidsHelpPhone
1-800-668-6868
www.KidsHelpPhone.ca

AAP Safety Net
www.safetynet.aap.org

Mental Health Services, Help and Support in Your Community

Canadian Mental Health Association
@CMHA_NTL
www.CHA.ca

*Warning signs identified by Canadian Mental Health Association recommendations from KidsHelpPhone.ca

Source: