



How social media HELPS their real-life relationships		How youth see social media HURTING their real-life relationships	
<p><b>Connect any time, any place</b> Since many of these youth typically only see friends at school, social media allows them to stay in touch to stay connected outside of school hours. They can also stay in touch with long-distance friends and family.</p>	<p><i>"You can't always see them when you want to, so social media helps with that because you can call them or Face-Time them whenever you want."</i></p>	<p><b>Spreading hurtful or untrue information</b> Itasca area youth described how social media can lead to "drama," bullying, or spreading rumors. Others said it can spread judgmental, hurtful, or untrue comments, sometimes ruining friendships.</p>	<p><i>"There can be times where there is lot of unwanted drama [on social media], causing feuds between a lot of my friends." "Social media is a place that many people use to create and start rumors."</i></p>
<p><b>Better communication</b> Some youth wrote that it felt easier to communicate with their friends over social media, particularly if they felt shy in person or if they wanted to discuss a more sensitive topic.</p>	<p><i>"[My friends] listen more if it's in text, so when it's not in person they can't just cut you off from your sentence."</i></p>	<p><b>Acting differently on social media</b> Youth said they have seen friends seem very different on social media, which can hurt their relationships. For instance, if a person started a rumor online, "it could change the way you look at them," now that you see their "true colors." As a result, some youth said they now hesitate to believe what others say on social media.</p>	<p><i>"People will do anything behind a screen." "People you know in real life tend to be meaner to you online." "They are a different person on social media." By using social media, "...you couldn't know whether someone is telling the truth or not."</i></p>
<p><b>Get to know each other better</b> Some youth wrote that they could share and learn more about their friends through social media. Some friends share more or are more willing to tell the truth. Some also value being able to store memories of their friendship, such as pictures and text.</p>	<p><i>"I'm not dependent on my social apps, but it's helped me get to know the people I'm around much more. Instead of taking 100 days and 20-min conversations each day. It's a continuous thing, which in the end is a great help."</i></p>	<p><b>Straining friendships</b> Youth said while constant access can sometimes be good, it can also add pressure to continually respond to friends' texts or queries. Others noted that there is pressure to craft responses to friends in ways that don't cause misunderstandings or confusion.</p>	<p><i>"It causes a lot of pressure to constantly be talking to people. People take it personally when sometimes I don't want to respond—even though it doesn't have anything to do with them, and I just need my space." "Most of the time people don't know the tone in what they are saying. Some people might think they are being mean when they are really not or the other way around."</i></p>
<p><b>Helps stay connected</b> Youth shared examples of how they are able to maintain contact with their friends outside of in-person interactions. Some felt that social media communication is simpler, and therefore easier to connect with a friend at any time.</p>	<p><i>"I don't have to be rebuilding relationships after long breaks of not seeing people."</i></p>	<p><b>Becoming all-consuming</b> Some youth feel anxious about the role of social media in their lives. Some worried about how many "likes" or "comments" they receive. Others described how they or their friends have become consumed with their devices.</p>	<p><i>"I think it takes away from relationships because we are so concerned about what is going on, on social media." "People are on their phones too much, even at lunch time!"</i></p>
<p><b>Plan time together</b> Youth use social media to plan events and get together.</p>	<p><i>"If you text or call them, you can ... make a time to hang out ... and stay very close when they are away somewhere."</i></p>	<p><b>On the other hand...some youth don't see a downside</b> Many survey participants responded to the question about the negative effects of social media on their relationships.</p>	<p><i>"It does not make relationships worse"</i></p>