Mental health, digital technology and the college campus

Younger people are the greatest consumers of social media with 90% of individuals 18-29 using social media. Social media use has both positive and negative effects, as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative mental health effects</th>
<th>Positive mental health effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>Enhanced communication skills and social connections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Increased exchange of ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsive behavior</td>
<td>Development of new interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Facebook” depression – when status updates, photos etc. make users feel unpopular or in some way diminished</td>
<td>Building on social communication and friendships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Survey of 123,000 students:

- 31% So depressed in the last 12 months it was hard to function
- 51% Overwhelmingly anxious

American College Counseling Association’s 2013 survey of college counseling centers:

82% reported increases in the number of students with severe psychological problems.

Youth and social-media technology to help address mental health issues:

“Highly usable, engaging and supportive,” according to a *Journal of Medical Internet Research* study. Campuses are capitalizing on that mindset.

**Online visits** – where student and counselor connect by online video or phone – augment existing counseling services.

**Tweets and other posts** can send links on how to handle stress, for example, when counselors are out of the office.

**Digital technology is a win-win for students:**

- Addresses mental health stigma; there is little or no coming in or out of the counseling center
- Provides the flexibility to meet the needs of a population that tends to work and play almost all hours of the day
- Offers an option that may be more relaxed than meeting a mental health professional in person