

# Mental health, digital technology and the workplace

**In general, social media use is prevalent and on the rise.**

▶ Americans' social media use in 2005 **5%**

Americans' social media use today **72%**

**Not surprisingly, younger people are the greatest consumers of social media.**

▶ Social media use 18-29 **90%**

Social media use 65 and older **40%**

Social media use has both positive and negative effects on younger and older adults, as shown below.

Age group	Preteens, teens and young adults	Older adults
<b>⊖ Negative mental health effects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolation</li> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Compulsive behavior</li> <li>• “Facebook” depression – when status updates, photos etc. make users feel unpopular or in some way diminished</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distraction and poor memory functioning</li> <li>• Weakening of face-to-face communication skills</li> </ul>
<b>⊕ Positive mental health effects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced communication skills and social connections</li> <li>• Increased exchange of ideas</li> <li>• Development of new interests</li> <li>• Building on social communication and friendships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved social connection with social groups and beyond</li> <li>• Increased brain activity; older brains have more neural activity with internet use than without it</li> </ul>

Employees and employers alike need solutions that address mental health and wellness challenges.



**Consumer health technology a growing market:**  
**Mobile app use has tripled over 4 years**



2014: **16%**

2018: **48%**

This consumer trend extends beyond the United States. In one workforce survey in England:



**72%**

of respondents said they have or would use online counseling services, and **82% said they have used or would use websites** to search for mental health advice and information

Technology-enabled CBT tools were popular among respondents.



**52%**

**said they would use chatbots** – a computer program that simulates a human conversation

**EAP is a potentially useful asset with historically low use.** Employers can tap into this growing comfort with health technology to increase their Employee Assistance Program (EAP) utilization.

<https://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/social-media/>

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<http://www.center4research.org/social-media-affects-mental-health/>

<https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/01/30/the-sandwich-generation/>

<https://www.pwc.com/us/en/industries/private-company-services/library/financial-well-being-retirement-survey.html>

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