

*for PARENTS**



CRIME STOPPERS CYBER SAFETY RESOURCE GUIDES:

Social Media and Mental Health

*We remain committed to our mission
to **solve and prevent** serious crime
in the Greater Houston Area.*



** This material is intended for adults only.*

DID YOU KNOW

MENTAL HEALTH includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

Our mental health can go on to affect how we relate to others, handle stress, make decisions, and how we compare ourselves and/or judge others.

Our brains are not fully developed until one is 25 years old. The limbic system and prefrontal cortex are two imperative parts of the brain for teenagers: the limbic system is responsible for survival and pleasurable experiences, and the prefrontal cortex is responsible for impulse control, problem solving, empathy, emotions and much more.

BARK 2021 ANNUAL REPORT STATISTICS

After analyzing 3.4 billion messages across texts, email and 30+ apps and social media platforms, BARK 2021 Annual Report found that:

- Compared to their 2020 Annual Report, there was a **25.15% increase** in alerts for **self-harm and suicidal ideation** among kids ages 12-18.
- **19.69% of tweens** and **42.05% of teens** used language about or were exposed to **anxiety**.

- **32.11% of tweens** and **56.40% of teens** engaged in **conversations about depression**.
- **Top 5 Social Apps** flagged for **severe suicidal ideation**: **Discord, Reddit, Instagram, Snapchat** and **Tik Tok**
- **Top 5 Social Apps** flagged for **depression**: **Instagram, Discord, Snapchat, Tik Tok** and **Facebook**



UTILIZING THE ONLINE WORLD TO NAVIGATE YOUR TEEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Crime Stoppers of Houston's CEO, Rania Mankarious, wrote a book called *The Online World: What You Think You Know and What You Don't*. This valuable resource has a step-by-step action guide for parents that include four critical tools for helping students and parents navigate the online world:

- Nearly **40% of young people** report that social media has a **negative impact on how they feel about themselves**, and the other 60% aren't aware of it (*Outback Treatment, 2020*).

- **Depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation and suicide** are real potential consequences of the online world and are considered internal threats, and **can be influenced by external threats**.

Suggestions for helping tweens and teens intentionally and purposefully deal with the online world:

- Scheduling regular check-ins that target the specific internal and external threats that may affect your child:
 1. Recognize the threat(s)
 2. Conversations with you or therapist as needed
 3. Create exit strategies for determined threat(s)
- To learn more about *The Online World*, visit the website on the last page.

HOW TO HELP:

Suggestions for being proactive in supporting your teen's mental health:

- **Keep a watchful eye** if you think there are warning signs of **child depression**.
- **Monitor online and offline activity**.
- Use an **understanding and empathetic approach** in your conversations and interactions.

- **Avoid** the language of **blame** or personal responsibility.
- **Act as soon as you spot signs** of teen depression.

Common signs of depression to watch out for:

- **Changes** in social behavior
- **Loss of interest** in activities
- **Physical appearance** and demeanor
- **Academic changes**
- **Abnormal behavior**
- **Unusual or alarming online activity**

Suggestions for approaching a teen who may be experiencing mental health issues:

- **Address the subject directly** and compassionately
- **Actively listen**
- **Use** their **preferred method** of communication
- **Develop** shared ways of talking about mental health
- **Provide healthy outlets** for conversation and connection



Contact Us

We hope that this resource guide is beneficial to you, your family and your community. Please reach out if you have any questions, would like more information or would like to request a presentation.

For a student related presentation requests and questions, contact: ssi@crime-stoppers.org.

For parent & community requests and questions, contact: scp@crime-stoppers.org

How to Report



Call 713.222.TIPS (8477)



Use our Mobile App

Download app name: Crime Stoppers Houston



Go to crime-stoppers.org



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A CYBER SAFETY RESOURCE FOR ALL FAMILIES:

THE ONLINE WORLD

WHAT YOU THINK YOU KNOW AND WHAT YOU DON'T

4 CRITICAL TOOLS FOR RAISING KIDS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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