

Beyond the Socials -

Strategies for Supporting Young People Through the Social Media Changes

Upcoming restrictions on social media use for under-16s will affect individuals and families differently. For young people who have used social media regularly, the adjustment may be challenging. While change is possible, it often requires time and support. Below are practical strategies to help your child / teen navigate this transition:



START THE CONVERSATION - CHECK IN EARLY!

Ask your child / teen how they feel about the changes and what concerns they have.

Examples of open-ended questions to start the conversation

- How do you feel about these changes?
- What might be hardest for you?
- Do you remember another time you had to make some sort of big change?
- What helped you get through that time?



QUICK TIPS

LISTEN WITH EMPATHY

Acknowledge their feelings. Try not to move straight into problem-solving or just telling them it will be fine.

Connections with peers are important for young people - convey to them that you understand their fears or frustration.

CLARIFY WITH UNDERSTANDING

Find out what they know about the social media changes and explore the details together. Knowing the facts about what is changing might be reassuring (e.g., can still access some elements of YouTube).

Help your child / teen to understand the reason for the changes.

EXPLORE THEIR CIRCLE OF CONTROL

Help them identify what is within their control and what is not and encourage them to focus on that things that they can control and try not to worry about the things that they cannot.

OFFER REASSURANCE

Let them know they are not alone and that you are there to support them while they adjust to the changes.



PLAN AHEAD

COLLABORATE ON A PLAN

Successful behaviour change requires planning. Consider using our free Game Plan tool to guide the process and collaborate with your child to complete it.

ENHANCE OWNERSHIP

Encourage your child to suggest solutions that will work for them to enhance their ownership of the plan – this is more likely to result in success.

IDENTIFY CHALLENGES

Discuss times when the changes may feel hardest (e.g., after school, weekends) and ensure time is spent mapping out how to manage these.

EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES

Suggest other offline activities to replace screen time or, where necessary find other screen-based alternatives (e.g., alternative messaging services to chat with friends).



PRESERVE MEMORIES

Encourage your child / teen to download photos and other content they want to keep.

MAINTAIN CONNECTIONS

brainstorm ways to stay in touch with friends and family, both online, and in the physical world. Provide information about groups they can reach out to for support about specific issues.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

Talk about your own past experiences and how you've managed change. Share the coping strategies that worked for you.

SUPPORT EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Some young people might react to the changes more strongly than others. This is a normal part of behaviour change. Help your child identify these strong emotions and offer suggestions to assist them to regulate these if needed.*

*Download our free tip sheet 'Helping Your Child / Teen Cope with Difficult Emotions'. If you are unsure how to support your child's / teen's strong emotional response consider reaching out for professional support.



MODEL HEALTHY HABITS

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Limit your own phone use and demonstrate balanced social media habits.



DEMONSTRATE COPING SKILLS

Young people learn from those around them. Don't be afraid to let your child know when you are feeling strong emotion and then show them how you manage this.



PROVIDE ONGOING SUPPORT

REINFORCE POSITIVE CHANGES

As the changes take effect, talk to your child/adolescent about ways they have replaced social media and encourage/reinforce healthy alternatives or creativity used to stay connected to peers and supports.

NORMALISE CHALLENGES

Continue collaborating on solutions.

CONTINUE TO MONITOR ONLINE SAFETY

The changes to social media use doesn't mean that all online risks are eliminated, and some young people might turn to platforms that are less safe or present similar risks. Discuss this with your child / teen and check-in regularly.

SEEK HELP IF NEEDED

If you notice signs of distress or experience disruption to daily life, consider professional support.



Additional resources for Young People:



kids helpline

Qwibbl (by Kids Helpline)

<https://www.kidshelpline.com.au/qwibbl>

Includes quizzes, videos, and brain-hack tools to help young people understand their thoughts and feelings (termed their 'Qwibbl').

My Circle (by Kids Helpline)

<https://www.kidshelpline.com.au/my-circle>

Free, confidential, private, and safe social media platform for 12 - 25 year olds in Australia. My Circle is monitored by qualified Clinical Moderators to ensure that the conversations are safe and supportive.



Headspace Online Communities

<https://www.my.headspace.org.au/online-communities/>

Headspace hosts group chats that young people can join to connect with others and share their experiences. All group chats run between 6:30pm – 9:45pm during school terms and they can join/leave at any time.

qheadspace out-spoken

<https://headspace.org.au/our-impact/campaigns/lgbtiqaplus/>

A range of online resources including videos and online support groups for LGBTQIA+ young people.



ReachOut Yarn Up

<https://www.au.reachout.com/collections/yarn-up/>

A safe space for First Nations young people to connect with community, hear from others, and access wellbeing resources and support.



Minus 18

<https://www.minus18.org.au/events/>

Supportive space and community for LGBTQIA+ young people aged 12 – 19.



Support for Parents

Caraniche Support Sessions

Individual coaching Sessions