

ONLINE SAFETY AND MENTAL HEALTH:



IDEAS FOR PROFESSIONALS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN.

WHAT'S THE LINK?



Research has shown that children's mental health is impacted by their use of technology, and in particular - social media use. For example, in a recent survey, 90% of Young Women said that they felt pressured to look a certain way on social media. Furthermore, research has found that spending 5 hours or more on social media per day triples the risk of Depression for young people. This resource therefore offers some ideas for professionals to support children around their online safety and subsequent mental health.



MODELLING.

Model good boundaries and a healthy online/offline balance. Support children to implement 'device-free' times in their routine, to make use of apps that help reduce app usage, and to turn off notifications. Help them to work out offline activities that benefit them too.

CURATING YOUR FEED.



Encourage children to talk about how they feel when using social media. Support them to 'curate' their feed so if they are spending time online, at least it is making them feel good about themselves and providing inspiration.



ACCESS TO SUPPORT.

Do the children you work with have access to support services and useful content? They may not wish to speak to adults about how they are feeling so we need to ensure they have access to correct, helpful information and websites such as the police, CEOP and the Childline Report, Remove Tool for example.

INVOLVE THEM.

Ask THEM what is important to them. Consider surveys or group discussion. Don't talk about the internet like it's the enemy - this is divisive and outdated. Talk to them about the positive aspects of social media.



FILTERING AND MONITORING.



If in a school, regularly review your filtering and monitoring system - is it fit for purpose? Who responds to any breaches? Involve children by explaining why certain things are blocked. Move quickly if a child appears to be searching for something harmful.

