

# Teens and Social Media: Impact on the Youth Mental Health Crisis

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Presentation to:

Municipality of Anchorage  
Health Policy Committee



A scenic view of a snow-capped mountain range with a dense forest in the foreground. The mountains are rugged and covered in patches of snow, with a valley visible between them. The foreground is a dense, dark green forest. The sky is a mix of blue and grey, suggesting a cloudy day.

# **ABOUT THE ALASKA EATING DISORDERS ALLIANCE**

# Mission Statement

To provide help and inspire hope by engaging our diverse communities for Alaskans affected by eating disorders.

- Education
- Support
- Advocacy
- Body Confidence

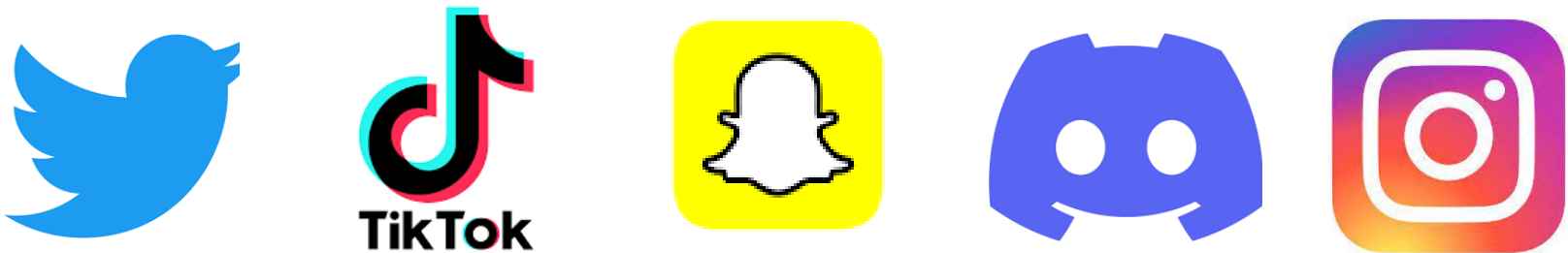




# **SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH**

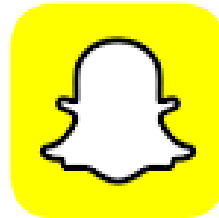
# Youth and Social Media – Who is Using It?

- 95% adolescents aged 13-17 use social media
- Despite minimum age requirements of 13 nearly 40% of children ages 8-12 use social media



# Youth and Social Media – How Much Are They Using It?

- 51% of teens visit social media at least 1x daily
- In 2021, 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported an average of 3.5 hours daily
- Nearly 1/3 report they use social media “almost constantly”
- On average, teens are online 9 hours per day (not including homework)



# Potential Benefits of Social Media for Youth

- Connection
- Self-expression & creativity
- Peer-support



# Potential Harms of Social Media for Youth – Mental Health



- Increased depression & anxiety
- Increased disordered eating
- Increased body image concerns



# Eating Disorder Risks Associated with Social Media

- Online body comparison
- Promotion of “thin” body ideal
- 46% of 13-17 year olds say social media has a negative impact on their body image



# Risky Content Exposure



- Diet and “wellness” content
- Influencer health challenges
- Pro-eating disorder information
- Graphic and extreme content showing suicide and self harm
- Algorithms pushing risky content

# The Bottom Line

*“The most common question parents ask me is, ‘is social media safe for my kids’. The answer is that we don't have enough evidence to say it's safe, and in fact, there is growing evidence that social media use is associated with harm to young people's mental health.”*



**U.S. Surgeon General  
Dr. Vivek Murthy**

# What Can We Do?

## Individual Efforts



Butterfly Foundation Podcast – “Young people, body image, and #socialmedia”



YoungMinds.org – A Guide for Social Media and Mental Health

[www.akeatingdisordersalliance.org](http://www.akeatingdisordersalliance.org)

# What Can We Do? Legislative Solutions



**Federal Level:** Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA)



**State Level:** SB80 – Mental health in schools



**Local Level:** “Out of Kids Hands” Act

# To learn more, contact:

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