

Could Surfing Social Media Really Push You to Suicide?

There's no denying that the media and internet have a hold on young people's lives. According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2018, Snapchat, Instagram and YouTube are the most popular social media sites for teenagers, with 95 percent having access to a smartphone and 45 percent saying they're on it constantly. The effect social media has on teenagers spurred a U.K. professor to investigate the issue, and his results are startling.

Louis Appleby is a professor at the University of Manchester and leads the National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England. Appleby conducted a study between 2014 and 2016 where he investigated the clinical reasons behind suicide. The Telegraph relays the findings, "the research into 595 suicides by young people aged under 20 showed 128 had used the internet in a way that was suicide-related."

Appleby notes that although many cases for self-harm are spurred by poor health, bullying, school-related anxiety and relational stress, *social media is normalizing self-harm further*. Appleby also found that financial and emotional deprivation was also a cause. "It [self-harm] becomes something that transmits across the subculture of young people, it becomes part of how they talk about their lives, how they talk about stress, and how they expect to respond when stresses occur," Appleby said. {eoa}

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