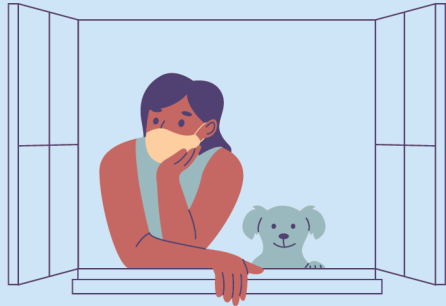


The Changing Relationship of Adolescents with Social Media and Digital Platforms



Research on **social media use among teens** must take into account the **effects of the COVID-19 pandemic**.

Hamilton, J. L., Dreier, M. J., and Boyd, S. I., (2023). Social media as a bridge and a window: The changing relationship of adolescents with social media and digital platforms.

What was this about?

The **COVID-19 pandemic** changed **adolescent social interaction** as teens communicated through social media. This shift became **normalized** post-pandemic and completely **changed the relationship between teens and social media**.

What was explored?

This article explores how adolescents have used social media during the **COVID-19 pandemic**, and how **use during that time period** has had **lasting effects** in how teens **today** experience **social interactions both online and offline**.

What did we find?

Teen use of social media **shifted from connections with close friends to engaging anyone from all over the globe**. Reliance on these spaces during the pandemic made it an **integral** part of seeking identity-based support. **Exposure to violence and news online increased** and SM became a primary source of sharing this information. Social media use and its **impacts on mental health** became very **individualized** and **circumstantial**.

Key Takeways

Adolescents' SM behaviors and social worlds were likely shaped in unique ways due to the pandemic. In the absence of traditional developmental experiences, teens had a **unique reliance on social technology to learn about themselves and connect with others**, which has had **both positive and negative impacts**.