

# The Effect of Social Media on Youth Mental Health in Powell, Wyoming

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## Hypothesis

Educating youth and caretakers on the harmful mental health effects of social media will promote the development of safe social media behaviors and improve community well-being

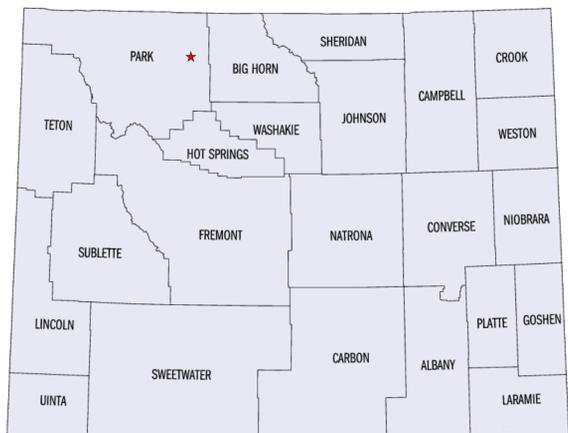
## Background

Powell, WY is a rural community located in Park County in Northwest Wyoming

- Population: 6,439 (2022)
- Median Age: 34 (WY: 38)
- Target Audience: Youth and teens

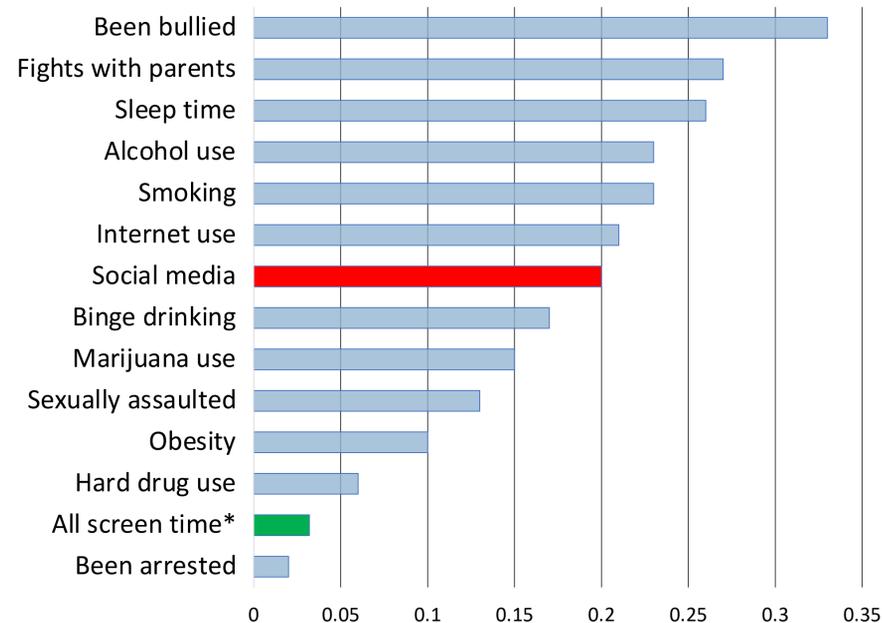
### Community conversations:

- Powell is experiencing rising rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide among youth and teens
- Middle school instituted a phone ban during school hours after observing a decrease in student socialization and increase in bullying due to social media use



## Literature Review on Youth Mental Health

- Increase in social media use is connected to an increase in loneliness, depression, and anxiety
- Females are more likely to make upward comparisons on social media, which is associated with lower mental well-being
- Social media has a stronger link to mental health than binge drinking, sexual assault, obesity, and drug use



Activities and correlative strengths to poor mental health outcomes

\* 2019 research lumped all screen time together

## Deliverables to Community

- Community partners for this project are Doctors Mike Bohlman and Sarah Durney, and PA-C Amy Buck of Powell Valley Healthcare (PVHC)
- Literature review was presented to PVHC staff
- Educational brochure was created for PVHC staff to share with patients

### Did you know?

**93%** 93% of teenagers report using social media

Social media use has a larger effect on mental health than binge drinking, sexual assault, and drug use

**7.7hrs** Teenage use of recreational screen time is estimated to be 7.7 hours a day

Higher social media use is associated with greater loneliness, lower self-esteem, and body image dissatisfaction

"Because there is a bidirectional relationship between depression and problematic social media use (PSMU), this may create a negative feedback loop whereby PSMU causes more depression and depression drives more problematic social media use cyclically."

-Journal of Behavioral Addictions. Samra et al.



### Healthy Social Media Use

#### Limit social media use

Limiting social media use to 10 minutes per platform per day is shown to have a significant positive impact on well-being.

#### Disconnect prior to bed

Interactive electronic use at bedtime is shown to reduce sleep duration (shifting the circadian rhythm) and reduce melatonin (further delaying sleep onset), which both contribute directly to poorer mental health.

#### Do not compare yourself

Making comparisons between yourself and edited online images often leads to feelings of depression and inadequacy, especially in young females. Remember that online images often do not depict reality.

#### Turn off notifications

Notifications are shown to trigger FOMO (fear of missing out). Silencing notifications helps improve focus and makes it easier to avoid constantly checking your phone.

#### Build real life relationships

Although it may be difficult, having face-to-face conversations is healthy. Try to meet new people by volunteering or joining a club or sports team.

Educational resource created for PVHC

## Next Steps

- Education for PVHC physicians on the new educational resource
- Distribution to patients and caretakers by PVHC physicians as they see fit
- Ideal behavioral outcome: youth to limit or discontinue social media use

## Acknowledgements

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