

**LiveMore ScreenLess Presents:**  
**Research on the Harms of Screen Misuse and Overuse for**  
**Members of the Minnesota Senate Education and Finance Committee**  
**Monday, January 25 2021**

**Research Findings.** According to numerous studies, the negative impact of screen overuse and misuse impacts the healthy development of young people and declares growing evidence on the following dimensions of wellbeing: Physical, Mental, Social, Emotional and Cognitive, with special considerations for Equity and use of Social Media. This document highlights research in each dimension of wellbeing. For additional research references, please see LiveMore ScreenLess [Data Briefs](#).

**Physical** – the physical effects of screen misuse and overuse includes but is not limited to sleep disturbances, eye strain, headaches, obesity, back and neck pain, physiological changes in the brain

(a) [OBESITY STUDY](#)

- a. Children who watch television at bedtime were 2.4 times more likely to be overweight or obese than children who do not watch television, and that children who use their phones at bedtime were 2.3 times more likely to be overweight or obese than those who did not.

**Mental** – the mental effects of screen misuse and overuse includes but is not limited to depression, anxiety, suicide ideation, addictive tendencies

“The [2019 Minnesota Student Survey](#) data showed more Minnesota students than ever report having long-term mental health, behavioral or emotional problems. This number was up from 18 percent of students surveyed in 2016 to 23 percent in 2019.”

(b) [DEPRESSION STUDY](#)

- a. Social comparison and feedback seeking by teens using social media and cell phones were linked with depressive symptoms.

(c) [ANXIETY STUDY](#)

- a. Greater social media use, nighttime social media use and emotional investment in social media were each linked to worse sleep quality and higher levels of anxiety and depression.

(d) [TRENDS](#)

- a. 2019 Minnesota Student Survey revealed an upward trend in anxiety, depression and suicide ideation among young Minnesotans.

ADDICTION tendencies occur with: 1. Social Media 2. Pornography 3. Video Gaming 4. Information Overload 5. Compulsive Spending

**Social** – the social effects of screen misuse and overuse includes but is not limited to loneliness, social upward mobility comparison, nomophobia, sexting, cyberbullying, unfiltered access to pornography, social and interpersonal skills effects

(e) [CYBERBULLYING AND SUICIDE](#)

- a. While students who experienced only school bullying or only cyberbullying were about 1.6x significantly more likely to report suicidal ideation, students who experienced both forms of bullying were more than 5x as likely to report suicidal ideation.
- b. Students who experienced only one form of bullying were at no greater risk for attempted suicide, while those who experienced both forms of bullying were more than 11 times as likely to attempt suicide.

(f) [CYBERBULLYING STUDY](#)

- a. Students who self-identified as “gamers” are not only significantly more likely to have bullied or cyberbullied others during the previous 30 days, but they are also more likely than non-gamers to be the victim of bullying at school and bullying online.

LONELINESS - In 2017 U.S. Surgeon General Murthy declared that the U.S. has a social isolation and loneliness epidemic, and youth are no exception.

“While counting “friends” and “likes” are priorities for kids in this age of social technology, adolescents and young adults have some of the highest rates of loneliness today.” – Dr. Vivek Murthy, 19 th U.S. Surgeon General of the United States

A 2018 Cigna U.S. Loneliness Index-trend that younger generations are lonelier than older generations.

**Emotional** – the emotional effects of screen misuse and overuse includes but is not limited to emotional dysregulation, decreased ability to express empathy, lowered self-esteem

(g) [EMPATHY STUDY](#)

- a. With increased social interactions and extended disengagement from digital devices, adolescents will experience an improvement in their ability to recognize and understand nonverbal emotional cues.

**Cognitive** – the cognitive effects of screen misuse and overuse includes but is not limited to distraction, diminished academic performance, decreased working memory, decrease in cognitive capacity and functioning, increase in ADHD

(h) [ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE STUDY](#)

- a. During class, students frequently used their computers for nonacademic purposes and the amount of time spent on their computer during class led to lower final exam scores, regardless of their interest in the class, motivation to succeed, and intelligence.

**Equity** - The effects of screen misuse and overuse impacts all generations, genders, race, and social class; however, studies reveal technology poses a greater detriment to underserved populations on social mobility comparisons; academic achievement; distraction by devices in the learning environment; compromised use of tech as a learning tool; reduced SEL skills; lower levels of learning motivation and self-confidence

(i) [EQUITY STUDY](#)

- a. Low-achieving students are more likely to be distracted by the presence of mobile phones in the classroom compared to high achieving students, regardless of the mobile phone policy.
- b. Low-achieving students gain the most from a ban, but there are no significant gains in student performance if the ban is not widely complied with.

**Social Media** - the negative impact of *social media* on young people includes: sleep disruption, increased cyberbullying and rumor spreading, increased depression and anxiety, declines in life satisfaction, loss of interest in daily activities with peers, increased tendency to send sexualized images, suicidal ideation, self-harming and obesity.

(j) [FOMO STUDY](#)

- a. 2018 study suggests that limiting social media use to 30 minutes a day significantly reduces feelings of loneliness and depression, and that awareness of social media use alone can significantly decrease anxiety and fear of missing out (FOMO).

**LiveMore ScreenLess Presents:**  
**SOLUTIONS**  
**for Addressing Overuse and Misuse of Screens and**  
**Improving the Wellbeing of Minnesota's Young People**

**Digital Wellbeing Resource Hub.** Support the development of LiveMore ScreenLess library of resources for young people, parents, schools, afterschool agencies, and community-based organizations so that LiveMore ScreenLess can best serve Minnesota as the premiere resource for Digital Wellbeing promotion.

**Network of Organizations.** LiveMore ScreenLess will identify and partner with key local and national organizations focused on aspects of healthy use of screens and healthy youth development, including the issues of cyber-bullying, suicide prevention, mental health, anti-pornography, mindfulness and social and emotional learning in order to create a robust network for tackling this complex problem. LiveMore will collaborate, coordinate and build upon Minnesota assets to bring this unaddressed issue of the harms of screen misuse and overuse on our children to all advocates of young people.

**Train-the Trainer Series.** LiveMore ScreenLess will implement the digital wellbeing train the trainer series for all Minnesotans serving and advocating for young people in Minnesota including youth development and leadership organizations, schools, community-based organizations, government sectors and other related agencies.

**Peer-to Peer Training Development.** LiveMore ScreenLess will deliver peer to peer training to develop young people as mentors and leaders so that they can further advocate and promote digital wellbeing among their peers and younger students.

*“The overuse of technology isn’t the only problem, it is the experiences that are fundamental to healthy development that are being replaced by the overuse of technology.”*

-Dr. Richard Freed, psychologist and author of Wild Child.