

Tom Holland steps back from 'overwhelming' social media pressure, and shines a light on stem4

Three in ten young people say they can't quit or limit time on social media, even if it improves their physical and mental health

Young people are now three times more likely to connect with friends online than they are to meet up in person, according to a new survey by teenage mental health charity stem4 to mark Youth Mental Health Day (19 September).

But lack of social connections in the real world, and pressure to look and behave a certain way online, has left half (50%) of young people saying they lack social confidence and that anxiety and fear of rejection is holding them back from making new friends.

Two thirds (63%) of young people say they now go on social media every day to connect with friends. This is while just one in three (28%) meet up with friends in person daily, four in ten (39%) weekly, and one in five (23%) monthly.

Could you quit social media to protect your mental health and wellbeing?

On Sunday, 26-year-old actor Tom Holland announced he had taken a social media break as social media apps had become "detrimental" to him as he would continue to read things about himself online and "spiral".

But unlike Tom, a third (32%) of the young people told the survey they are unable to limit or reduce the amount of time they spend online, even if it would mean achieving better overall physical and mental health.

"There is an awful stigma against mental health and I know that asking for help and seeking help isn't something we should be ashamed of," the Spider-Man actor added.

Of the 2,007 young people surveyed ahead of Youth Mental Health Day, nearly half (46%) say they are currently experiencing mental health difficulties, of which three in ten (30%) have not had the courage to ask for help. These difficulties are often compounded by feelings of loneliness (44%), being left out (39%), and isolation (33%) either all or most of the time. This has led many (44%) young people to say they are struggling to make and maintain friendships.

In his video, Tom then went on to say he felt compelled to come on [social media] to talk about [@stem4org](#), one of the many charities [@thebrotherstrust](#) is extremely proud to support. "I'd like to take a moment to shine a light on their fantastic work ... Love to you all, and let's get talking about mental health."

Shining a light: Youth Mental Health Day, 19 September

stem4's Youth Mental Health Day (YMHD) will this year take place on Monday 19 September, and the theme is #ConnectMeaningfully. Over the past few years, young people have had to experience many of their most formative experiences virtually—from joining a new school/college/university, to celebrating a 'big' birthday.

Dr. Nihara Krause, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and CEO and Founder of youth mental health charity stem4, commented:



“The impact of the pandemic on social connections has had long reaching effect. Social media can be a force for good, but what this survey finds is that there needs to more balance in young people’s lives. Social media shouldn’t be used as a replacement for positive connections in the real world. What is positive from this survey, is that young people say they want to make meaningful relationships. However, they are being held back by a fear of rejection and a lack of knowing how to make connections, particularly as they have missed out on two years of social experiences and of developing social confidence post pandemic. We want to change this by encouraging everyone to provide young people with opportunities starting with YMHD. This includes having meaningful peer and family conversations.”

By focusing on the importance of meaningful connections and having a solid support system, this year’s YMHD will invite young people across the country to reflect on how their relationships (with family, friends, educators etc.) have changed over the past few years. stem4 has created a number of resources (including for educational establishments) and is asking everyone to share ideas and set goals of how young people can #ConnectMeaningfully, to ensure they are fostering relationships that will support and positively impact their mental health.”

Dr. Nihara Krause continued:

“We are incredibly grateful to Tom for taking a few moments to record a video and talk authentically about the importance of protecting your mental health; that it’s important to speak out even if it’s difficult; and that there are alternatives, such as our evidence-based apps, that you can use to start the journey towards feeling better.”

- Ends -

Notes to editors

For interviews and regional breakdown of survey results across the UK, please contact:

SENSO Communications

Penny Lukats, 07775 992350, penny@sensocommunications.com

About the young people’s survey

Survey of 2,007 regionally representative young people aged from 12 to 21 carried out Survey Goo between 15th and 19th July 2022

About stem4

stem4 is an award-winning charity that supports teenagers with their mental health. It provides evidence-based education, builds resilience, enhances motivation to change, and provides signposts to ensure early intervention and action. stem4 focuses on commonly occurring mental health issues in teenagers including eating disorders, anxiety, depression, self-harm and addiction.

The charity works with students, parents and teachers in secondary schools and colleges, and with health professionals such as GPs and school nurses through its conference programme and through its digitally delivered workshops suitable for PHSE in schools. **stem4** is also included in the Royal College of GP toolkit.

■ stem4’s free, evidence-based, smartphone apps

With children and young people experiencing difficulty and long waiting times in accessing effective treatments, **stem4** has developed four NHS-approved smartphone apps, all based on evidence-based strategies, to help young people in the treatment of and recovery from their mental health difficulties. These apps have been downloaded and used over 2 million times. These apps include

- **Clear Fear**, which uses the evidence-based treatment Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) to help manage the symptoms of anxiety;
- **Calm Harm**, which uses the basic principles of an evidence-based therapy, Dialectic Behaviour Therapy (DBT) to help manage the urge to self-harm;
- **Move Mood**, which uses Behavioural Activation Therapy to help improve low mood and manage the symptoms of depression;
- **Combined Minds**, which uses a Strengths-Based approach that has been shown to be effective in recovery, providing practical strategies for families and friends to support teenage mental health.

For information on stem4's Youth Mental Health Day please visit youthmentalhealthday.co.uk for stem4's full range of downloadable resources or follow [@stem4org](https://www.instagram.com/stem4org) on social media to keep up to date.

www.stem4.org.uk