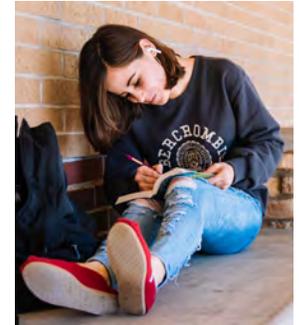


CyberTeens

Findings from Wave 1 of the CyberTeens Research Project at University Hill Secondary School



CyberTeens is a 4-year study looking at adolescents' technology engagement. The aim of the study is to better understand youth's motivations for using technology, and how this relates to their mental health and relationships with parents and peers. The study is being conducted by Dr. Jenna Shapka and the DCTech Lab at UBC. These are the findings from Wave 1 of the study at UHILL.

Participants

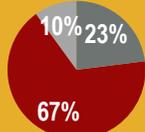
Grade 8: 127 Grade 9: 118
Grade 10: 125 Grade 11: 126
Grade 12: 107

Compared to before COVID-19, teens reported increases in the following:

- 55% feel more Anxiety
- 48% feel more Loneliness
- 46% feel more Depression

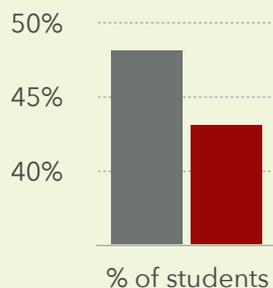
Since COVID, teens feel...

- Disconnected
- Connected
- Same



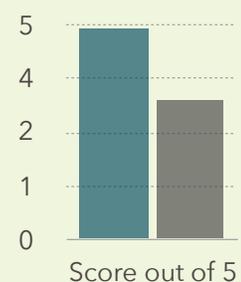
Adjusting to new ways of learning

- It's been difficult
- I've adjusted ok



School Belonging

- Belonging Before COVID
- Belonging Since COVID



Since COVID-19 started...

Mental Health

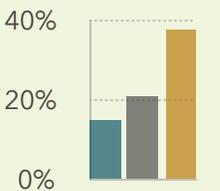
Understandably, and like most of us, UHILL data show that since COVID, about half of students report feeling more anxious, depressed, and lonely. However, the majority of teens told us that they feel just as connected as they felt before the pandemic began. Only 23% of UHILL students report feeling disconnected from others.

One student said: *I still talk with my friends and have a strong relationship with them. The main problem is stress from school, which has made me extremely stressed and anxious, giving me less time to connect with my friends.*

Academics

Feelings on the quarter system:

- Prefer it
- Same
- Struggle with it

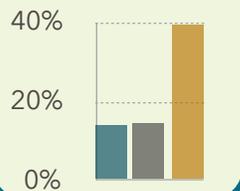


Understandably, changes to learning have been a struggle for many students. When asked to compare learning to before COVID-19, over half of students reported that they struggled with online learning, while just over half also reported they are struggling with the quarter system. They said that motivation and focus have been the biggest barriers to learning.

One student explained: *My motivation towards learning has decreased since it feels more independent and you have to rely on yourself more. Besides that, Covid-19 has actually taught me a lot, like responsibility, and time management. I feel as if Covid-19 has decreased my quality of learning and taken away some of my tools that have helped me.*

Feelings on the remote system:

- Prefer it
- Same
- Struggle with it



Technology

Not surprisingly, our data show an increase in screen time. On average, 59% of students report that they are using their phones "somewhat more" since the start of the pandemic. Interestingly, more than half of teens who told us they felt connected emphasized the importance of screens.

One student shared: *I've been calling my friends on hangouts since covid...We technically are using technology and calling, but at the same time, we aren't engaging and putting everything else aside. We work on our homework, projects, and multitask while we are there with each other.*

How can I help Students?

For Teachers:

Show empathy for your students, as many have a lot going on (COVID-19 stress, extracurricular, university applications)

Check In with students in creative ways and remember that students are reluctant to seem like a burden

Encourage interactions between students in the same groups

Change things up by delivering more content online and use in-class time to foster relationships and explain concepts

Consider cutting down the amount of material to focus on depth instead of breadth of material

For Parents: We know that parents are stressed about the increased amount of time that youth are spending on screens. However, our data show that it has been an important tool for getting through COVID (both for school and to maintain friendships). Use this opportunity to start a dialogue with your kids about screens, find out from them if the results of this study resonate with them. Find ways to empathize and connect with them about some of the positives of technology.

For Parents and Teachers: Most kids have stayed connected and their mental health is okay, but many kids have had moments of increased anxiety, depression, and loneliness. This is normal, but if your child or student's behaviour has notably changed (e.g., sleeping the entire day, always in a bad mood/extremely negative, unexplained headaches or body pains), do not hesitate to check in with them and/or seek mental health support for them.